

R E L I G I O N
CONSIDERED AS THE ONLY BASIS OF
H A P P I N E S S
AND OF
T R U E P H I L O S O P H Y.

A WORK written for the INSTRUCTION of the
CHILDREN of his Most Serene Highness
THE DUKE OF ORLEANS;
And in which the PRINCIPLES of modern pretended
PHILOSOPHERS are laid open and refuted.

BY *Brulart de* X
Madame the Marchioness of SILLERY,
HERETOFORE COUNTESS OF GENLIS.

“ Il y a dans les maximes de L'Evangile une noblesse
“ et une élévation où les cœurs vils et rampans ne fauroi-
“ ent atteindre. La Religion, qui fait les grandes ames,
“ ne paroît faite que pour elles; et il faut être grand, ou
“ le devenir, pour être Chrétien.”

*Maffillon, second Dimanche du petit Carême, sur
le respect que les Grands doivent à la Religion.*

“ There is in the maxims of the Gospel a nobleness, an
“ elevation, which base and servile souls cannot attain.
“ Religion, which forms great minds, appears to be made
“ for them alone; and it is necessary to be great, or to
“ become so, to be a Christian.”

I N T W O V O L U M E S.
V O L. I.

D U B L I N:

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TO
HIS GRACE

THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY LORD,

WERE I not penetrated with the most profound conviction of your Lordship's consummate piety, merit, and abilities, I would not dedicate this religious essay of Madame la Marquise de Sillery, heretofore Madame de Genlis, to your Grace; but your Lordship's well-known character not only authorises the dedication, but even encourages me to recommend it in a particular manner to your Lordship's protection. Whatever promotes piety, charity, and good works, has a peculiar claim on the Head of the Church, and still more on the heart of your Lordship.

The former works of Madame de Sillery may have convinced your Grace of her capability to call forth the latent talents of her pupil; to inspire him with emulation; to sow in his young mind the seeds of real generosity and true nobility; and to give him

him all that literary and polite instruction, which, in the age of puberty and reflection, will produce the finished character of a fine gentleman. The present Work will prove to your Lordship, that she is not less qualified to instruct in a religious than in a civil capacity. Her chief aim, my Lord, has been to set forth religion in its most amiable colours of meekness, charity, and toleration; to point out the duty of the man, and particularly of the prince, to his God, his neighbour, and himself; and to prove, that the only road to real happiness, even in this world, is to revere and live up to the principles of the Christian Religion; of which, my Lord, you are the head, and chief ornament, in this island.

I am, with unfeigned zeal,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

most obedient,

humble Servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

Trans-

Translator's Preface.

THE works of Madame la Marquise de Sillery, heretofore la Comtesse de Genlis, are too well known, and too much esteemed, to stand in need of any commendation from the pen of the Translator; he will not, therefore, presume to give his opinion of the performance which he has the honour of presenting to the English nation; her name alone suffices to induce the perusal of it. Its importance and excellence will be more than sufficient to recommend it to the serious attention of the world, and to place her name in the same rank of religious writers, which it has long possessed among those of the instructive and agreeable.

To know Madame de Sillery, is to esteem her qualities, and to admire her talents. The Translator, honoured with her friendship and protection, is deeply impressed with these sentiments: to connect himself more

closely with her, to have more frequent opportunities of enjoying her company and conversation, were the principal motives which at first induced him to engage in this translation; the performance itself soon became sufficiently interesting to repay all his trouble and attention.

The Reader may depend on the fidelity of the present Work. The Translator has never lost sight of the Original one moment; preferring, in a disquisition of this kind, fidelity and perspicuity to ornament and elegance. In its progress it has been read and compared with the original by Madame de Sillery herself; who, well acquainted with the English language, is the best judge whether her sentiments be conveyed with neatness and precision. It has met with her approbation; and with this recommendation the Translator begs leave to submit it to the candid Public.

Author's

Author's Preface.

THIS Work was written for the children of his Most Serene Highness the Duke of Orleans, and particularly for his Highness the Duke of Chartres, to whom the manuscript was read towards the end of the year 1786, a few months after his first communion. I know no work upon this important subject, within the reach of the capacity of young people of both sexes. It was what was wanting in the system of education ; which made me determine to print this essay, which perhaps may be useful, because there exists no other of the kind.

It was not possible for me to assemble, in a single volume, all the proofs which establish the truth of religion, and to give the salutary but revolting detail of

all the extravagant opinions and pernicious principles which modern Philosophy has renewed and propagated within the last thirty or forty years. I have contented myself with presenting a certain number of proofs, and by quoting some facts, and several examples, which will give an idea of the morals and philosophic system of the age.—I could not have written this Essay, without being acquainted with the works which attack Religion. I read all these audacious productions;—painful enterprise, to a mind susceptible and free from prejudices! How is it possible to see, without infinite concern, men, distinguished by their talents, reject their natural intelligence, and suffer themselves to be corrupted by an unmeaning pride?

I found in these baneful performances so many errors, false quotations, and so great an incoherence, that I could not conceive how it was possible that they had not been refuted
and

and entirely overthrown. I was not ignorant that many able advocates had zealously stood forth in defence of Religion, and, that in spite of the manœuvres and cabals of the philosophic sect, many works of this nature were in the greatest reputation*. Until that time, my avocations had not permitted me to read those esteemed authors; but intending to write upon the same subject, I resolved to suspend every study which was not relative thereto, and accordingly, for upwards of two years, I have only read such works as have been written in favour of Religion.

I confess that this reading caused me as much surprise, as it was instructive and interesting. Several of these works are truly of a superior kind, and there is not one among them wherein a *dangerous principle*, a *paradox*, or an *incon-*

* Among others, *Les Lettres de quelques Juifs, à M. de Voltaire.*

sistency, is to be found. These authors have worked upon a solid basis; by adhering to truth, one may be useful without talents: whilst the most monstrous productions are the sole fruits to be expected from a profound and enlarged understanding, which gives itself up to error.—The active heat of the sun's scorching beams renders the mortal poison of venomous plants more violent and dangerous; and it is thus that the fire of genius, extolling vices as well as virtues, gives to a depraved man a fatal and destructive energy only.

It naturally occurs here to enquire, why the defenders of Religion, if they had any merit, have not had a greater reputation? How comes it that their works have been so little read? It is because the men who courageously defend such a cause are penetrated with the truths they support, and that their conduct accords with their belief: they have not caballed or intrigued; they have not
sought

fought to increase their own fame; they have written what their consciences dictated. Men of the world have not read their works, because they were too strongly attached to opinions which favour the passions in general. They contented themselves with reading the replies of their adversaries—replies full of atrocious injuries and absurd calumnies. These philosophers had a wonderful talent of stifling the reputation of those who were not of their party. They knew how to persuade the public, as long as their Chief was in existence, that the author of *Dido* was a fool *. They have also succeeded in many other things of this kind. Yet the letters of *quelques Juifs*, in spite of all their efforts, made a great impression;—but I dare assert, that this excellent work has not yet had all the reputation to which so much erudition, reason, and perspicuity, added to a fine, sensible, and moderate critique, are justly entitled.

* A very celebrated French author, to whom Monsieur de Voltaire gave that epithet.

I found

I found in the works of these respectable defenders of Religion, a great number of reasonings and ideas, which I have introduced into this Essay; and, according to a custom founded upon principles little followed at present, I have not appropriated to myself that which was not my own, by transcribing these passages in a manner peculiar to myself, or in disguising them by trifling alterations. I have faithfully copied them; they are marked with inverted commas, and the title of the work is quoted at the bottom of the page. I must moreover declare, that by attacking modern philosophy, I do not mean to attack any living author (at least those of my own country.) I do not confound true philosophers with those perverse men, who have written with so much audacity against religion, government, and morals. I do not even confound, with their pernicious writings, several works which a critique, perhaps too severe, has reproached with containing dangerous principles, by the consequences solely which may be drawn from them. I think this
severity

severity is carried too far, because it is possible it may be unjust—since it is easy to be deceived by admitting such like interpretations; and to be deceived, in such a case, is to calumniate. Therefore, from respect to true philosophers, I shall only attack those who have usurped that title, and have dishonoured it by the unrestrained licence of their writings.—This haughty sect is no more. I have seen the chief, and the most famous partizans, disappear; and although young, at least as an author, I can also say, *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo he was not: yea, I sought him, and he could not be found**.

Through the whole course of this Work, I address myself immediately to his Highness the Duke de Chartres. This was judged to be the best manner of fixing his attention. I have not changed it, because several persons were of opinion that it made the lessons more interesting, and

* Psalm xxxvii. 35, 36.

the reasoning more clear ; all of which are proportioned to the understanding of a child of twelve or thirteen years of age —yet supposing that this child has read a great deal, and that he has been made perfectly acquainted with every thing respecting Religion ; which ought to be the case at the epocha of a first communion.

Although this work was written for a prince of the blood, children of every denomination will therein find useful truths, and principles which are proper for mankind in general.

R E L I G I O N

CONSIDERED AS THE ONLY BASIS OF

H A P P I N E S S

AND OF

TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

C H A P. I.

PLAN OF THE WORK.

FOR the last five years your Highness has dedicated a considerable portion of your time to the reading and essential study of Holy Writ. You have read the sacred books of the Old Testament, and the most striking passages of it are now daily recalled to your mind by particular extracts from that sacred composition. You have admired the divine laws and precepts which God himself delivered to Moses: the wonderful agreement between the prophecies and events recorded in history has been pointed out to you: you have several times read the Evangelists; their sublime moral has made a deep impression upon your heart: finally, in order to inspire your Highness with a true piety, the only solid basis of human virtues, no pains have been spared to give you a perfect knowledge of
your

your religion. It is impossible to be acquainted with it without respecting it, and it is vice and ignorance only which can alienate men from it. I have collected and reduced to order a part of the extracts and all the reflections which this course of reading has furnished us with. My present intention is, to lay before your Highness the principal proofs upon which Christianity is founded, and the inconsistencies, errors, and dangers of false philosophy, which dares to attack religion. I will enter into a detail of the qualities and virtues which constitute a true Christian, of the duties which this name imposes, and of those which your elevated rank more particularly prescribes to you.

Beloved children, who encircle me ; you to whom I have consecrated my daily cares, my lucubrations, and my life ; you will listen to me with an unwearied attention : your susceptible and grateful hearts will receive with joy and avidity the counsels of a tender friend, who is anxious to discover to you the sources of true happiness. You know that I have but one single object in view, that of improving your minds—of making you virtuous. I am sensible of your affection for me, I can therefore repeat to you, with the utmost confidence, the words of the psalmist, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me ; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*"

C H A P II.

OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, AND OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

"**M**EN must of necessity own," says Doctor Clarke*, "that, supposing it cannot be proved to be true, yet at least 'tis a thing very *desirable*, and which any wise man would wish to be true, for the great benefit and happiness of men; that there was a God, an intelligent and wise, a just and good being, to govern the world.—

"——If they argue, that our notion of God arises not from nature and reason, but from the art and contrivance of *politicians*—that argument itself forces them to confess, that 'tis manifestly for the interest of human society, that it should be believed there is a God.—

"——No man can be so absurd as to contend, that 'tis as comfortable and desirable to live in such an uncertain state of things, and so continually liable to ruin, without any hope of renovation; as in a world that were under the preservation and conduct of a powerful, wise, and good God.—

"——Since the persons I am discoursing to, cannot but own that the supposition of the being of God is in itself most desirable—they must of necessity grant further, that, supposing the being and attributes of God to be things not indeed demonstrable to be true, but only *possible*, and such as cannot be demonstrated to be false, as most certainly they cannot; and much more, supposing them once to be made to appear *probable*, and but more likely to be true than the contrary opinion; nothing is more evident, upon these suppositions only, than that men ought in all reason to live *piously* and *virtuously* in

* Discourse concerning the being and attributes of God, vol. i. chap. 1.

“ the world ; and that vice and immorality are, upon
 “ all accounts, and under all hypotheses, the most
 “ absurd and inexcusable things in nature.”

Let us endeavour to seize and assemble all the important results of these reflections. Your Serene Highness must comprehend, that in effect the existence of a God, of a being essentially good, wise, and omnipotent, is the most desirable thing in the world. This idea can only be painful to the profligate and wicked. Eternal justice offers to them nothing but subjects of terror and dismay, and these are the only true causes of impiety and atheism. Those even who, intirely abandoned to these passions, obstinately refuse to acknowledge the God they offend, will nevertheless agree, that, if they believed his existence, they would think and act in a very different manner: it is therefore evident, that this belief leads, sooner or later, to virtue.—Order, peace, and happiness, are the fruits of virtue: it is therefore necessary to the felicity of human nature that men should be persuaded of the existence of God.—Atheists are forced to grant that it is impossible to prove that God does not exist. Therefore, this great question is, for themselves, at least in the class of things uncertain and doubtful ; all their reasonings are confined, respecting the main point, to this ; *it appears much more probable to us that there is no God: therefore we agree to believe that there is none.* But is a probability, however great it may be, sufficient to authorise so dangerous an opinion ? and would not a reasonable and clear demonstration, free from objection, be necessary ? In effect, when it cannot be proved that God does not exist, is it not thereby proved that he may exist ? This is then a doubt for the greatest unbeliever, and which no other reasoning can clear up ; and in such a doubt how dare men expose themselves to the dreadful risk of offending the Supreme Being by such an outrage ? There is no danger in submitting one's-self to the laws of a religion, whose precepts and morals the ungodly even are forced to admire ; on the contrary, by follow-
 ing

ing them we receive, in this life, the most precious recompences to which men can aspire—peace of mind and public estimation: and by rejecting these divine laws, we expose ourselves to the anger of an avenging Deity, who is able to inflict eternal punishments. Thus then it is true that impiety would be the most absurd and imprudent of all errors, even supposing that the existence of God was only problematical. But what will it appear to be, if the immutable truths, upon which religion is founded, be sought after and examined?

The proofs of God's existence are so striking, that we still doubt whether those who appear to deny them be truly atheists or not at the bottom of their hearts. Hazard can produce nothing but what is imperfect and ridiculous; every work wherein exact proportions and regularity are found, necessarily supposes an able and intelligent workman; where I see uniform and invariable laws, I am obliged to acknowledge a legislator. And it is thus in studying nature, and in reflecting upon her immutable laws, which direct the course of the stars, and which develope and perpetuate upon earth the seeds of fecundity and of life. In contemplating the wonders which surround us, reason alone discovers and proves to us the existence of a Supreme Being, Creator of the Universe. The voice of conscience agrees, upon this head, with the natural intelligence of the mind. In fine, every thing is united to demonstrate to man this important truth. To pretend that the heavens, the world, and creatures, have only been formed by a certain fortuitous arrangement of the particles of matter put in motion, is an absurd idea, which sublime eloquence and the most subtile metaphysic cannot render supportable. The most strange blindness and gross ignorance must be united, not to discover in the work of the creation design, end, and intelligence. Let the Anatomist be asked if he discovers neither design nor wisdom in the construction of the human body; let the same question, relative to the stars, be put to the Astronomer; let the Botanist be interrogated upon plants;

plants; and the Naturalist upon animals and insects: all these men, enlightened by a profound meditation, will agree together in answering, that the study of nature embraces an infinity of useful and sublime sciences; whose greatest attraction is that it discovers incessantly new subjects of admiration in the Author of the Universe. Therefore the abominable system of materialism is so extravagant, that there has never been a people who has adopted it. Nations the most reproached for their ignorance, or the darkness of paganism and idolatry, have never carried their folly and depravity so far as to profess atheism, and only to see in the creation the fantastic work of hazard.—It is true that the human mind cannot conceive the existence of an Eternal Being, who has never had a beginning; but if God did not exist, it would be necessary that matter, not having been created, should be eternal. We must therefore admit, in this as in many other cases, that which is absolutely incomprehensible to our weak reason, to wit, that there exists a being, or a substance, which has never had a beginning. For I repeat it, if there were no God, matter would uncontestedly be eternal. Therefore, although I may not be able to conceive eternity, that essential attribute of the Creator, I am notwithstanding obliged to acknowledge it.

These simple reflections have reduced the ungodly even to the necessity of acknowledging a God. They shake off an austere yoke, which vice and licentiousness cannot support, they reject worship and the law; but yet they dare not deny the existence of a Being Supreme.

If we admit a God, we cannot but represent him possessed of those august attributes proper to the absolute Lord and Creator of all. Eternal source of justice and of truth, God cannot deceive us; all his decrees must be equitable. These ideas, so natural, would be alone sufficient to convince men of the immortality of the soul. In reading history, in casting my eyes upon the earth, I often see crimes unpunished,

vice

vice triumphant, innocence oppressed, and virtue
 wretched. I know that the vicious will never taste of
 happiness nor repose ; but they may, by force of cor-
 ruption, harden themselves against remorse, obtain bril-
 liant successes, and intoxicate themselves with false
 glory. I know that the virtuous man will always find
 consolation in his own bosom ; yet if he be persecuted,
 calumniated, if he lose the objects of his affection, if
 misery and disease be joined to so many evils, I see the
 unfortunate victim of so fatal a destiny perish : can I
 then believe that eternal justice will neither reward him
 for his virtuous sacrifices, his resignations, nor his suf-
 ferings ; and that, after this deplorable life, the Crea-
 tor will replunge that wretched being into his original
 nothingness ? Can I believe that the profligate, with
 whom every thing has prospered, the successful usurper,
 Cromwell, for instance, the assassin of his king, has
 only had after his death a destiny like that of the unfor-
 tunate monarch whom he conducted to the scaffold ?
 How is it possible to reconcile with this frightful sys-
 tem, the idea of a God, of a Being supremely equit-
 able ? “ God,” says one of the most zealous defen-
 ders of religion *, “ may abandon his elect for a time ;
 “ this transient trial becomes a precious advantage :
 “ but he will in the end justify, avenge, and crown
 “ them. This protection is essentially contained in
 “ the idea of his justice ; therefore to deny the immor-
 “ tality of the soul is to deny the perfections of the
 “ Supreme Being, to annihilate his laws.—To take
 “ from God the essential attribute of being, the source
 “ the rule of what is good, the enemy of what is evil,
 “ is to destroy him.—God is truth and power ; his
 “ promises and threats are real. Conscience, which
 “ represents them, is true ; therefore intelligence, at-
 “ traction, remorse, whatever announces to us the
 “ law, announces immortality.”

* The Abbé Gauchat, D. D. See his *Lettres Criti-
 ques, ou Analyse et Réfutation de divers Ecrits modernes
 contre la Religion*, vol. i. let. 1.—Cet estimable ouvrage
 est en 18 petits volumes in-12.

Finally,

Finally, if I study the human heart, I still find new proofs of the immortality of the soul. There are profound sentiments which are neither the work of education nor of opinion. It is God himself who has graven, at the bottom of every heart, these indelible sentiments, which form the natural law. It is he who inspires us with remorse and pity, with the love of justice, horror of crimes, and that ardent and insatiable desire of happiness which it is impossible to find upon the earth. Yet if the soul be not immortal, if every thing perish with us, virtue is but a mere chimera, a weak convention, which can be submitted to exteriorly only, and this by the fear alone of the laws. God would therefore deceive us, in giving us an instinct and sentiments contrary to our nature : for if he have not destined for us rewards and punishments after this life, the only instinct proper for us is that of brutes. To live but to enjoy, ought to be our only philosophy. To combat our inclinations, whatever they may be, is a mere extravagance ; to seek after and desire fame, which may outlive us, is the height of folly. Virtue, heroism, are only empty words, created to exist but an instant. Precipitated into nothing, after so short a life, reason, even the voice of nature ought equally to cry out to us, *Make haste, and taste of every pleasure ; thou art going to be annihilated for ever : thou wert not born to combat thy passions, thou wert only made to give way to thy desires : there is but one real evil, pain, but one real good, pleasure.*

“ Let us suppose,” says the author whom I have already quoted *, “ the soul to be mortal, all the ties
 “ of society are broken, because man has no longer a
 “ neighbour ; no more relation with his cotemporaries
 “ than that dictated by personal interest. Being a
 “ member of a fugitive society, I have but slender con-
 “ nections with it, and of which I am the sole object.
 “ If they be troublesome to me, I can shake them off,
 “ no authority has a right to restrain me. It is only

* The Abbé Gauchat, vol. i.

the will of man, his policy which has formed these connections, and he cannot oblige me to adhere to them. In vain will he hold up the public good as a pretext; or display the titles of husband, father, magistrate, country, great words without meaning. The universe assembled could not establish our duties; they essentially suppose order and the will of God: therefore materialism will never prove that one ought to obey the prince, serve one's country, love one's parents and friends. These duties would have an human source only, and thence would be as unstable as our caprices and inclinations. But does not probity prescribe to us rules of decorum and mutual regard? Alas! what is probity, if the principle which consecrates it be overturned? Can men think of destroying the eternal law, and of substituting for it human suffrages, policy and interest? When once the bonds of the Creator are broken, no other motive is capable of fixing the mind, or of controuling the heart. To brave, in one's caprices, the manners and usages of the world entire, is to act consistently;—such were the Cynics.

“ If the soul be mortal, the punishments imposed by the laws are unjust. Crimes, of whatever nature they may be, are only pretended ones, sports of matter, legitimate propensities of nature, rights of each member of society. A terrestrial soul can owe nothing to patriotism. Its short existence, followed by annihilation, authorizes it to seek its happiness only. The whole world can neither require nor merit the sacrifice of its interests. Let us nevertheless suppose these punishments to be just, they are sterile and without force; the same policy which inspires society with the idea of punishing disorderly members, inspires these with address enough to evade the pains to be inflicted. It is not, therefore, hypocrisy and heinousness, but prudence and wisdom, to bury in silence injustices, calumny, and murder. Still more, since crimes are avoided but by fear of the laws, it follows, that if they can be violated

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" with impunity, force authorizes every thing. A
 " crime becomes a success, a title of glory ; an equal
 " right in every profligate : nothing can be secure
 " from those in whom power and rage are united."
 " ed."——It is impossible to deny that these horrid
 principles are not the necessary consequences of materialism. Wherefore then does the heart, the least pure, revolt at this frightful language ? Why that sudden involuntary admiration which virtue makes the wicked even to feel ? Why cannot the man, overwhelmed with vice, hardened against remorse, get the better of this first emotion ? Why has it happened that virtue has never shewn itself in any time or place, without gaining, in spite of prejudices, foolish opinions, ignorance, and barbarism, at least the veneration of men ? It may be neglected and abandoned ; but when it is displayed, it is impossible not to admire it.—Like the bright star which dissipates darkness, phantoms and fantastic shadows which alarm, during the night, the wandering imagination ; as soon as virtue appears, the vain sophisms which combat it are annihilated and forgotten ; and the admiration which virtue inspires, destroys all the pernicious errors and illusions produced by vice and the passions.

Notwithstanding these proofs, and many others whose detail would form whole volumes, of the immortality of the soul, men, with whom I will make your Highness acquainted in the course of this work, have existed, who, under the name of *philosophers*, wishing to dissimulate, and badly concealing an extravagant ambition and unbounded pride, thought that, sheltered under an imposing title, they might audaciously give way to the delirium of their imaginations ; determined to produce much evil, to make a little noise, and more hardy than ingenious, they created no new systems, but renewed pernicious errors, combated a thousand times, and which were annihilated and forgotten. Having found old arms, rusty and broken, they burnished and sharpened them with art ; they appeared new and glittering, and they left the ignorant to believe that they had made

made them themselves. They then undertook to destroy religion. They were not able to overturn that immoveable and sacred edifice ; but they corrupted morals, and dishonoured philosophy. It was they who, sometimes by reflections seemingly indirect, denied, in a thousand ways, the immortality of the soul. It was necessary, according to their system, to degrade human nature, and rank man in the class of brutes : they have also maintained *that man owed his superiority over other animals to his exterior form alone* ;—that if the horse had *hands*, he would have the understanding of man ; if the *ape were bigger*, if his motions were not abrupt and precipitate, he would do all that man can do*.

It is inconceivable that, with good sense, men cannot reason better : it is still more strange, that such reasoning should have been capable of persuading and perverting.—Your highness knows that the ouran outang is of the size of man, and formed like him ; that far from having *abrupt and precipitate motions*, it is a gentle animal, which has none of the habits of the little ape, and that its full intelligence is far above that of the dog. You remember that fine reflection of the greatest writer of the age :—“ The ouran outang is in effect an animal only ; but a very singular one, which man cannot see without considering himself, without discovering his own likeness, and being convinced that his body is not the most essential part of his nature.”

Why, indeed, has not this animal, which has *hands* like a man, the same address and industry ? Why is his intelligence confined to a few actions of imitation ? Why, at least, has not this animal, which most resembles man, a decided superiority over all other animals ? It is because man himself does not derive his superiority from his form. He neither owes it to his organization nor his senses. Many animals have the senses more perfect than ours †. A man blind from his infancy may have

* Livre intitulé de l'Esprit.

† L'excellence des sens n'a des effets bien sensibles que dans l'animal ; il nous paroît d'autant plus intelligent

have genius ; deprived even of speech, he would dominate, he would always reign over animals. Can the instinct of the most intelligent animal be compared to the reason of a man deaf and dumb from his birth ? Without the help of speech, man will always be a reasonable being ; with the gift of it, an animal would not cease to be a brute. Many birds can speak : of what use is this to them ? It is the union of speech and thought which belong to man alone ; or rather, it is thought which establishes that infinite distance found between men and animals.

“ The Creator was not pleased to make for man’s
 “ body a model absolutely different from that of the
 “ animal, but at the same time that he gave him a material form, resembling that of an ape, he quickened
 “ this animal body with his divine breath. If he had
 “ conferred the same favour, I will not say upon the
 “ ape, but upon the species, upon the animal which
 “ appears to us the worst organized, this species would
 “ soon become man’s rival. Vivified by the spirit, it
 “ would have had an advantage over others ; it
 “ would have thought and spoke. Whatever resemblance there may be between the Hottentot and the

que les sens seront meilleurs. L’homme, au contraire, n’en est plus raisonnable, pas plus spirituel pour avoir beaucoup exercé son oreille et ses yeux. On ne voit pas que les personnes qui ont les sens obtus, la vue courte, l’oreille dure, l’odorat insensible, aient moins d’esprit que les autres. Preuve evidente, qu’il y a dans l’homme quelque chose de plus qu’un sens interieur animal.

M. de Buffon.

The excellence of the senses has no very sensible effects but in the animal, which appears to us so much the more intelligent as his senses are stronger. Man, on the contrary, is not more reasonable or intellectual on account of having exercised his eyes and ears. It is not seen that persons whose senses are dull, who are short-sighted, hard of hearing, incapable of smelling, have less understanding than others. An evident proof, that there is something more in man than interior animal sense.

M. de Buffon.

“ ape,

“ape, the distance which separates them is immense;
 “because he is furnished interiorly with thought, and
 “exteriorly with speech*.”

Let us hear what an English philosopher †, as much distinguished by his virtues as by his superiority of talents, says upon the subject :—“ Among these and
 “other excellent arguments,” says he, “for the immortality of the soul, there is one drawn from the
 “perpetual progress of the soul to its perfection,
 “without a possibility of ever arriving at it ‡.”

Perfection is an end at once imaginary and real; it exists, but it is placed out of the reach of man: the soul will never be able to attain it, till it be disengaged from the ties which attach it to the earth. Until that instant, which will dissipate every cloud, man will have a glimpse only of perfection; and yet he will have, till the end of time, the possibility of approaching it, without being permitted to attain it.

“How can it enter into the thoughts of man,” says Addison, “that the soul, which is capable of such
 “immense perfections, and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, shall fall away into nothing
 “almost as soon as it is created? Are such abilities
 “made for no purpose? A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never pass; in a few years he
 “has all the endowments he is capable of; and were he
 “to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing
 “he is at present.”

Indeed, according to the remark of another philosopher §, “If animals were endowed with the least power
 “of reflection, they would be capable of some kind of progress: the beavers of to-day would build better
 “than those formerly did, and so of the rest. But
 “why do we introduce so much diversity into our pro-

* M. de Buffon. I have already quoted this passage upon the same subject in the *Veillées du Chateau*; it is the only fact that I have quoted twice.

† Addison.

‡ The Spectator, vol. i.

§ M. de Buffon.

“ductions? It is because our soul is our own*, and
 “that we have nothing in common with other species
 “but the matter of our bodies.”

Pretended philosophers, who are willing to reduce us to the state of brutes, declaim against the pride of man, who pretends to be sovereign of the earth, &c. Thus to deny the benefactions of the Creator, is to disguise ingratitude under a feigned humility. The earth was, without doubt, made for man : reason alone would be sufficient to convince us of it. The instinct of some animals prompts them to gather together provisions, and to preserve them for their use. The instinct of man is to cultivate the earth, and force it to produce whatever he pleases. In fine, man knows how to reduce animals to obedience. Are not these facts sufficient to prove that he may justly look upon himself as sovereign of the earth? of that earth which he renders fertile, and upon which, of all beings, he has alone the possibility of living in whatever part of its surface he may think proper to fix himself ; whilst animals can neither live nor multiply themselves in regions distant from those where they came into the world† ?

The Supreme Wisdom has made nothing by chance. It is impossible that our weak intellects can penetrate all its

* That is to say, as M. de Buffon explains it, that we are not reduced like animals to a general instinct ; and that, on the contrary, each individual of our species has a genius peculiar to himself, and a particular manner of perceiving.

† L'homme est le seul des êtres vivans dont la nature soit assez forte, assez étendue, assez flexible pour pouvoir subsister, se multiplier partout, et se prêter aux influences de tous les climats de la terre ; il est en tout l'ouvrage du Ciel, &c. Dans l'espece humaine l'influence du climat ne se marque que par des variétés assez legeres, parce que cette espece est une, et quelle est très-distincte, séparée de toutes les autres especes. L'homme blanc en Europe, noir en Afrique, jaune en Asie, et rouge en Amérique, n'est que le même homme teint de la couleur du climat. Comme il est fait pour régner sur la terre, que le globe entier est son domaine, il semble que sa nature se soit prêtée à toutes les

its designs: it is sufficient that it has permitted us to discern that which may be useful to us. It signifies nothing to me to know why God has created offensive animals and venomous plants (although these frivolous objections have been replied to in a very solid and satisfactory manner) but it is of great importance to know all the dignity of man, and all the rights he has received from the bounty of the Creator; and I clearly perceive that the earth was created for him. To perceive what man is to the creation, let it be considered what the creation would be without man. To what purposes could the most charming and useful productions of the earth, which are useless to animals, be applied—the flowers, their sweet perfume, metals, minerals, fire, and all the treasures which the earth and sea contain in their bosoms? The real benefits which Nature affords would be destroyed or become superfluous, the precious seeds of the harvest buried for ever in mire, torrents overflowed, thorns and brambles would cover the face of the earth; insects, ferocious animals would be numerously increased, and would destroy every feeble and defenceless species, the whole earth being merely

les situations. Sous les feux du midi, dans les glaces du nord, il vit, il multiplie, il se trouve partout si anciennement répandu, qu'il ne paroît affecter aucun climat particulier, &c.

Man is the only living creature whose nature is strong, extended, and flexible enough to be able to subsist and multiply every where, to accustom itself to the influences of every climate; he is in every respect the work of Heaven. In the human species the influence of climate is only marked by trifling varieties, because this species is single, distinct, and separate from every other. The white man in Europe, the black in Africa, the yellow in Asia, and the red in America, is but the same man dyed by the colour of the climate. As he was made to reign over the earth, the whole globe is his possession, it appears that his nature favours every situation. Under the burning heat of the south, the frozen snows of the north, he lives, he multiplies, and in the earliest ages was found so dispersed every where, that he does not appear to prefer any particular climate.

Buffon.

the haunt of a herd of furious monsters. Such would be the universe deprived of man. If the existence of man be so necessary to the order, harmony, and embellishment of the universe, that without it all nature would be put into disorder, may not it be believed that the earth was made for him ?

I have only presented to your Highness moral proofs of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul ; they are sufficient to confound the most hardened incredulity : but I must inform you that there still exists an infinity of metaphysical proofs, which concur, in demonstrating these important truths, in the most strong and solid manner. To enter into the detail of these, an application and comprehension, not possible to have at your age, would be required. But in a few years we will begin the examination of them, although it be not absolutely necessary ; the moral proofs being so clear and convincing, that they leave nothing to be desired : they must equally satisfy reason, the heart, and the mind *.

* There are several excellent works which contain these metaphysical proofs : amongst others, a Treatise upon the Existence of God, by Doctor Clarke ; a work wherein the reasonings are carried to the most convincing demonstration. The works of Abadie. The greatest part of the first volume des Lettres Critiques de M. L'Abbé Gauchat. *Traité de l'Existence de Dieu de Fenelon, &c.*

C H A P. III.

OF ETERNAL REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

YOUR Highness has seen, in the preceding chapter the existence of God proved by the admirable harmony of the heavens and the universe ; by the opinion, or rather the sentiment, of every people in every age ; by the voice of conscience ; and by an infinity of proofs and reasoning, which will for ever confound atheism : the proofs which establish the immortality of the soul are not less striking. If these two great truths be believed, that a God exists, and that the soul is immortal, it is no longer possible to look upon virtue as a chimera, as an human invention formed by the policy of men. It is God himself who inspires us with the sentiment which disposes us towards it ; but we have the dangerous liberty of hearkening to this divine voice, or to withdraw ourselves from the laws which it prescribes. If man had been formed in such a manner as that an irresistible attraction or inclination had always drawn him towards that which was good, and that an invincible horror had always kept him from vice, he would neither have been worthy of eulogium by his actions, nor, consequently of recompence. He would have been but a machine, which even by its perfection would not have been able to render to his Creator a just tribute of gratitude, because he would never have had a will or liberty in his actions. Many animals are endowed with a sublime instinct : the attachment and fidelity of the dog to his master comes solely from the organization of that animal. He is formed to love the person who takes care of him, even when his caresses are repelled, and that kindnesses to him are sometimes mixed with severe treatment ; but in fact he is but the affecting symbol of a pure and constant friendship. He loves without discernment or choice. He is as submissive, generous, and sensible, as the tyger is ferocious and

cruel, in following that instinct which is his master and guide. Such a being, however amiable it may appear, is never more than an automaton ; it acts by the effect of the impulsion only which is given to it, and from springs which put it into motion.—It is not so with man. Created free and reasonable, he can compare and chuse. If he wander from his duty he is culpable, and degrades himself, by renouncing the most noble of his faculties, that of subjecting his inclinations to reason. He cannot become criminal without being degraded, because he then voluntarily ceases to make a proper use of his liberty and understanding, acts contrary to the dictates of his conscience, and prefers not that which appears to him just, but that which he himself condemns.

Your Highness therefore conceives, that if man abandon himself to vice, he ought to be punished ; and that if he be virtuous, he merits reward, which he could not have pretended to if he had not had the liberty of chusing between good and evil, and of deciding himself in favour of the good, in supposing that he would be aided by grace ; which will be hereafter explained. Virtue can find upon the earth no reward worthy of itself, and it happens that, too frequently, it is there unknown and oppressed. But after this life, so short and unstable, it will enjoy eternal felicity. An immortal soul can neither be rewarded nor punished but by eternal happiness or punishments. It is here that modern philosophers have employed all their eloquence, in repeating all that impiety has ever suggested against the eternity of punishments. If materialism be a commodious system to those who, slaves to their senses, abandon themselves to their passions, the persuasion that *God is too good, too beneficent* to punish vice by eternal misery, is not an idea less favourable or encouraging to depravity.

Will it be said that God will inflict transient punishments upon the wicked ? But a destiny is not formed by momentary corrections. Can your Highness believe that the justice of God will not necessarily establish an
infinite

infinite difference between the fate of Ravallac and that of Henry IV. ? " For," says an author which I shall frequently quote*, " supposing punishments to be exhausted, what will become of the soul ? will it enter into immortal felicity ? but far from meriting this, it has only presented crimes to its judge : will it become annihilated ? its nature is immortal. By admitting eternal happiness and the end of punishments, it follows, that all men are necessarily saved. All terminable pain, compared with the length of ages, is nothing. Let men arrive at happiness a few centuries sooner or later, it is but an instant. Without combating our passions, without virtue, without worship, without prayers, man is assured of his fate. His soul is immortal, and pains are finite ; he is therefore necessarily destined to eternal bliss. Vice and virtue do not take two different routes, since their limits approach each other and become united. In point of morals, the most proper system to withdraw man from vice and to incline him to virtue, is esteemed the most true and conformable to the holiness of God. The end of punishments would take the barrier from crimes, and the motive from virtue. In spite of the idea of eternity, proved and admitted, the least sensual good, the fear of a trifling evil, still frequently gets the better of that dreadful consideration ; what would it do if it were entirely suppressed ?"

It is evident, that without a belief of the eternity of punishment, religion would have no influence upon morals ; and it is incontestable that this belief is the most powerful motive by which vice can be restrained, or virtue made to persevere. Yet it is this opinion, so useful, and even so necessary to the happiness of mankind, which modern pretended philosophers have attacked with the greatest fury. They have not denied the existence of God and the immortality of the soul ;

* The Abbé Gauchat, *Lettres Critiques*, tom. i. p. 289, et suivantes.

they have perceived that atheism is too revolting and absurd to be preached openly with success: but, on the contrary, in order to destroy religion more surely, they have affected to shew a profound veneration for the Supreme Being. Their works are filled with *pious invocations, pathetic prayers*:—and it is thus by a ridiculous mixture, joining impiety to hypocrisy, they seemed to render homage to the Divinity whose worship they wished to destroy: assuming characters calculated to deceive the multitude, they represented themselves as men of *simplicity*, full of *candour*, *sincere*, and above all, indulgent; as men beneficent, *devoured with a passion for the public weal*; as men *virtuous, penetrated with respect for morals*, and strongly convinced how important it is to the happiness of society that they should be pure. Yet these perfect sages, in spite of their simplicity and candour, have calumniated without scruple the religion they attacked: their books are full of extravagant imputations, mutilated passages, and false quotations*; and those who detected their falsehoods and errors, have drawn upon themselves their resentment and hatred. In spite of their beneficence, indulgence, and their *passion for virtue*, they propagated opinions whose pernicious consequences, relative to the order of society and happiness of mankind, they could not be ignorant of. By preaching virtue, they destroyed its end and most powerful motive: by extolling tolerance, they defamed and persecuted those who combated their opinions: by agreeing to the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, they established principles which led to materialism: in fine, by praising good morals, they corrupted them by the most licentious writings. These are the men who, during the course of a great number of years, have had so great an ascendancy over the mind, and so destructive an influence upon morals. They had, said they, so sublime an idea of the Creator, that they could not conceive that a beneficent being was not always ready to forgive: therefore, ac-

* Which will be proved in the course of this work:
cording

cording to this system, if God, after having made man, had communicated to him his designs, he would have said to him: "*I have created thee free and reasonable; I have imprinted at the bottom of thy heart the love of that which is good, and an abhorrence of that which is evil; thou wilt be so much the more base and culpable if thou prefer vice to virtue, as thou wilt act against the light of thy reason, as well as contrary to the dictates of thy conscience. Be just and good; I command thee to be so. Thou mayest, nevertheless, violate with impunity the laws of nature and of society, thou mayest renounce and offend me, become perjured, an assassin, wallow in the blood of thy brothers; treason, murder, parricide, all the most horrid crimes shall be forgiven thee, and thou shalt enjoy, in eternity, the state which is reserved for the most virtuous of men: rely always upon my goodness, and even in the midst of crimes be not afraid of my justice.*"

Can one believe, that if the Eternal had thus spoken, men would ever have made sacrifices to virtue? yet this is what that sublime idea, which philosophers have formed of the Supreme Being, is reduced to. What is goodness without justice? A weakness which renders the sovereign contemptible, and makes his subjects more to be pitied than if they were under an enlightened tyrant: it is that which philosophers call *the most noble attribute of God*. What! say they, how is it possible to conceive that God will punish with eternal misery the transient weaknesses of so short a life?—

"The goodness of God," says Tertullian*, "is not mercy only, it is holiness also; an holiness ever subsisting, ever the enemy of sin, and, by a necessary consequence, it must ever hate and punish crimes, provided crimes never cease to exist. Since, therefore, there is nothing in hell which destroys and abolishes sin, there can never be any thing which will hinder and destroy chastisement."

Repentance in this life may be expiatory, because it is, in that case, the effect of faith, and produces virtu-

* Quoted by Bourdaloue, Sermon upon Hell, vol. ii. of Lent.

ous resolutions, or generous sacrifices; therefore, as long as man breathes, he may hope for every thing from the infinite mercy of the Creator: but after death, repentance is but a vain phrenzy, a superfluous regret; all illusions have then disappeared, all seductions are destroyed for ever. O terrible and dreadful moment! when the soul, freed from its terrestrial bonds, shall immediately rush into the bosom of eternity! It is then, that it will be no longer able to reject or disdain truth, which will shew itself in its purity: it is then that it will be forced to acknowledge all the deformity of vice, and all the lustre of virtue. But if it be abandoned to wickedness, of what use will it be to it to conceive the mysteries which it could not comprehend during life? faith will no more sanctify belief; there will be no longer a merit in believing that a God, Creator and Judge of mortals, exists: he will be seen, and his judgments received! The disconcerted soul will have lost for ever the seducing errors which disguise from us the littleness of pride, vanity, and human wisdom. Deprived of its prepossessions, prejudices, and passions, it will be no longer capable of concealing from itself the deformity of vice; but it will detest it without becoming purified; this involuntary horror will only be produced by the frightful aspect of an hideous object. The time of sacrifice and expiation will be passed. It will be no longer permitted to go astray and stifle the voice of conscience. All will be laid open and judged; the overwhelming evidence of Infinite Wisdom will be every where presented; and it will then be too late to repair what is past. Reason alone is therefore sufficient to demonstrate to us, that it is impossible after death for a guilty soul to experience one efficacious regret; it will therefore remain impure and in its state of reprobation; and such, says Bourdaloue, is this terrible mystery——“ Sinners will groan eternally in hell; they will be there in a state of eternal penitence; but a forced one, a penitence of demons and souls in despair. Such a penitence will never efface sin, consequently sin will always exist; and as long as it shall exist, they will
“ be

“ be equally answerable to the justice of God, and exposed to his vengeance.”

Since the guilty soul cannot, after death, be purified of its faults, it will remain for ever impure, and, by a necessary consequence, it will be in that state reprobated for ever. This frightful destiny is the inevitable effect of the nature of things, of the constant and invincible opposition which exists between God and vice, between supreme justice and iniquity, which nothing can expiate. All that Divine Mercy could do for the salvation of men, without overturning that immutable order, has been done. Man cannot obtain pardon for his sins, except during his life; and in each moment of his existence, even at the instant which precedes its termination, a sincere repentance may procure it him. God, more indulgent to him than the laws and the world, will be ever ready to pardon his crimes and errors which human justice and society never forgive. Moreover, an immortal felicity is to be obtained, a felicity above all the ideas that man can conceive of it; and the goodness of God deigns to grant this immense and infinite reward to the latest repentance, as well as to the most persevering virtue! But would even virtue dare to pretend to it without the mercy of the Creator? In effect, what is a life which appears to us the most irreproachable, in the eyes of him who reads in the bottom of our hearts, who knows our concealed inclinations, the motives of all our resolutions, our most secret thoughts and actions? Is the best of men exempt from weaknesses, and has he never any defects to reproach himself with? Does not the reward which God reserves for his elect, infinitely surpass all that the most perfect of his creatures have a right to expect from his justice? And this immortal recompence may still be obtained by a sinner!

— Such is the mercy of the Supreme Being, whom pretended philosophers have denied under these attributes: they have need of a God whom they can offend with impunity to the last moment of existence, a God who, far from requiring sacrifices and expiations, does
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not even demand worship and homage; a God who should have accidentally created man free, since the criminal use of liberty is to remain unpunished, in short, a God deprived of the most august attribute of divinity;—of justice;—the true idea of which necessarily contains those of firmness and inflexibility. There is a barrier where human clemency ought to stop; which if it passes, it ceases to be a virtue, and becomes a vicious weakness. Men may nevertheless content themselves by pardoning, without being constrained to give to vice the reward designed for virtue: they are not reduced to the choice of punishing or of rewarding the culpable; a choice upon which justice does not permit them to be undecided, without destroying the most simple notions of good and evil. But after death there are only two states for the immortal soul, both eternal, one of felicity, the other of reprobation. The sovereign judge must punish or reward. If he do not punish the profligate, polluted by a thousand crimes, and dead in the bosom of wickedness, he must necessarily elevate him to the highest degree of glory and happiness. If such were the will of the Divinity, justice and virtue would be only chimeras, and this one supposition would destroy all the most sacred and acknowledged principles of morality. In spite of so many absurdities, it is not surprising that this pernicious system has found so great a number of approvers. Persons whose interest it is to suffer themselves to be convinced, and who are otherwise little capable of reflecting upon so serious a matter, are easily persuaded. This system favours all the passions. Why indeed should it be combated, if it be believed that the Supreme Being will pardon its most culpable excesses? By what caprice should we reproach ourselves with faults which our sovereign judge would look upon without indignation? Ought our consciences to be more severe than he is?—Certainly not. We can never shake off the yoke of a salutary fear, without losing at the same time our principles, and

we

we shall then preserve only such of our virtues as come from our inclinations.

Solomon said, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*: This is a fine thought, because it contains great truths. God is our father, our sovereign, and our judge: these are the august and sacred characters which religion gives him, and those alone which can inspire all the sentiments due to the Creator—love, gratitude, respect, and fear. It is impossible for me to reflect a moment upon my own weakness, and to consider the infinite grandeur and power of the absolute Lord of heaven and earth, without being struck with admiration mixed with fear. It is this respectful fear which, with love, forms the sentiment called *piety*. Without fear, no longer piety, worship or prayers. Without fear one may speak of God with eloquence, but he is not in our thoughts; and the idea that he sees and judges us every moment of our lives, that idea, more useful than all the precepts of morality, cannot have the least influence upon our secret actions.

How can such a thought restrain me, or even interest me for a moment, if I am little anxious about the judgments of God? Let not your Highness be dazzled with these phrases, which you will hear frequently repeated;—*God cannot be implacable; he will not punish with eternal pain creatures which he has formed; our weaknesses can only excite his pity; his indulgence is as unlimited as his power*. When these common-place philosophical expressions shall be quoted to your Highness in a dogmatical and haughty tone, recollect the important result of this chapter. Think, that to take from men the fear of eternal punishment, is to free them from the only restraint which can withhold them from vice; and that it is as contrary to the interest of morality, whether a man be a materialist, or that he believe the God which exists always indulgent to crimes, and incapable of punishing them.

If a God exist, crimes must be punished, and virtue rewarded; therefore the soul must be immortal: for it frequently happens, that in this life, vice is triumphant, and
virtue

virtue oppressed.—Philosophers cannot deny that virtue is often wretched and in obscurity, and they agree that God has reserved for it eternal rewards; but they maintain that vice is always punished upon earth, and that consequently the justice of God is satisfied. *Remorse*, say they, *is the only hell of the wicked.* I recommend particularly to your Highness, to preserve yourself from that dangerous enthusiasm, with which an idea apparently hardy, new, and brilliant, inspires superficial minds. If you wish to preserve a sound taste and just judgment, reflect before you can run into admiration, without which you will frequently admire monsters and follies. Consult always your reason; which will tell you that it is not true that *remorse* is the only *hell of the wicked.* It is very true that conscience reproaches us with our faults, and that, in general, the vicious man is wretched: but, as it has already been remarked, by force of repelling remorse, and resisting its threatening voice, one may in the end become free from it, and taste with joy the fruit of crimes. Let magistrates be consulted, judges who, in the course of their useful but painful career, have examined so many culprits; hear what they have to say. They will all tell you, that great profligates are inaccessible to remorse;—and that must be the case. The man who only feels a temptation to commit a crime is already a monster, a perverse being, who neither admits religion nor natural law, and who looks upon the principles of morality as so many prejudices; yet an involuntary horror still restrains him. His depraved mind, in spite of himself, furnishes him with reasonings which encourage him: but, however corrupted he may be, he is not in the habit of committing crimes, and in that state he cannot escape the remorse that pursues him. In vain does he look upon it as a species of folly, as a weakness; in vain does he drive it from his conscience, or hold it in contempt; he is beset and torn by it: he cannot stifle that formidable voice, which cries, at every instant, from the bottom of his heart, *Thy hands are yet innocent!*——*What wilt thou do?*——*Wilt thou*

thou have the hardiness to consummate the crime?—This idea chills his soul—frightens him: it suspends his sleep, or presents itself in his dreams. It is then in reality that his criminal and combated soul feels all the torments of hell: it is then that he would cry out, O virtue! hast thou ever imposed sacrifices whose pain is to be compared to the dreadful torments which I suffer by giving myself up to vice?—At length he triumphs over remorse, over fears, pity and nature. All is over—he is determined.—That day—at that hour, the victim will fall under his strokes. He has passed from temptation to a fixed and determined resolution. Abandoned from that moment by Heaven, he is a tyger thirsty of blood, who yields to his ferocious instinct.—The fatal hour arrives—What blood will be spilled?—Perhaps that of a wife! of a virtuous and faithful wife!—O Heaven! what a crime!—Has it ever been committed?—Yes, even in this age: and such were the horrid consequences of an *Incredulity* which is called *Philosophy*, and of a passion called, by Philosophers, an *Amiable Weakness*—irreligion and love:—execrable example of the excesses which an impetuous passion united to atheism may lead.

In the profound darkness of night, the monster, armed with a poignard, hastens his steps towards the unfortunate woman who will wake but in death; and this from the object of her affections, from the father of her children! The assassin arrives, advances, approaches the bed of his victim: in this horrid moment he shudders; his resolution is shaken; but it is the last time he will be afraid to commit a crime, that a crime will make him tremble! When he has once given the first blow, he will redouble it without trembling*; an ungovernable rage succeeding to terror will for ever destroy pity and remorse in his atrocious soul. After having committed a like deed, this villain has nothing

* There is no instance of an assassin having abandoned his design, or having shewn a sign of horror, emotion, or pity, after having given the first stroke.

more in common with feeling beings ; he is no longer a man ; he has changed his nature. Ever after a stranger to humanity, and incapable of repentance, if he acquire a certitude that his crime will not be discovered, he will remain unconcerned ; and despising real happiness, which is only given to virtue, he will enjoy the favours of fortune, and taste freely of pleasure ; he will believe himself to be happy, and he will live at least unpunished. Such was the destiny of the famous criminal, the *Abbé de Gange*, who committed the most horrid crimes with as much reflection and coolness as obstinacy.

He was a priest, and attempted in vain to corrupt his brother's wife. Not having been able to succeed he poisoned her, after having strove to assassinate her at different times during two days. He afterwards went abroad ; where, having changed his name and become an apostate, he lived many years unknown, peaceably, and protected by a princess, who, deceived by a supposed name, and seduced by shining talents, placed in atrocious hands a dear and only son ! In this house he mixed with society, which was enlivened by his cheerfulness and wit. He enjoyed a perfect state of health, and always discovered an equality of temper. It is impossible to feign for whole years this disposition of mind. He was not only free from remorse, but he was arrived at such an excess of perversity, that he only considered his crimes as the natural effect of great passions. One circumstance of life leaves no doubt of his sentiments in this respect. He had found means to gain the heart of a young lady of distinguished rank. He wished to marry her, but the inequality of his birth was made an objection. He then thought to overcome every obstacle by declaring his real name, and, with all the confidence and audacity of profligacy never before heard of, he had the impudence to utter these terrible words, *I am the unhappy Abbé de Gange* *. The horror which he inspired confounded him ; he had not been

* Causes Célèbres.

able to suppose it ; it was impossible for him to conceive it. It appears to me, that there are few circumstances as striking as this is, and which otherwise demonstrate better, how useless greatness of understanding and knowledge are to a depraved soul, and how absurd all calculations are in such cases.

This was a profligate who had no idea either of remorse or crime. Can it be believed that the execrable Brinvilliers was less susceptible of remorse, when she went daily, under the veil of charity, to the hospitals, to try the force of her poisons upon the sick ?——Remorse does not enter into infernal souls, or rather it is for ever banished from them * ; *therefore remorse is not the only punishment of the wicked* : and if it were true, which undoubtedly it is not, that in general profligates were susceptible of it, that murderers and highwaymen had, after every assassination, a distracting remorse, one example to the contrary would be sufficient to convince us that the phrase, *Remorse is the only bell of the wicked*, is a philosophical sentence, as false as it is dangerous. Great crimes change entirely the nature of man, and deprive him of the possibility of feeling compunction. Great neglect of duty, if it did not corrupt the heart, or if it be accompanied by dishonourable circumstances, exposes him to eternal remorse. But if this neglect do not draw upon him public contempt, modern philosophy will furnish him with arguments which will place him out of the reach of repentance. Philosophers have greatly preached up beneficence ; but they have all painted love and its errors as *amiable* and even *interesting weaknesses*. When men are authorized to give way to the most seducing and dangerous of all the passions, they may be equally corrupted and pleased. “ One
“ may write modestly and think evilly ; but can virtue

* I do not conclude from this that the wicked can be happy : they are for ever deprived of happiness, and even of that tranquillity which belongs to innocence only. But I maintain that, deprived of every sentiment of humanity, they cannot feel remorse, and that consequently, when they escape the laws, they live unpunished.

“ be

“ be represented under disordered images? If there
 “ be a becomingness in conversation, is it not much
 “ more rigid in writing? It is no longer a sound, a
 “ rapid description, it is a licentious and durable paint-
 “ ing. Pagan philosophers would have thought their
 “ lessons degraded by the admission of voluptuous
 “ images; and in an enlightened age, in pretending
 “ to instruct, shall all reserve be shaken off? What a
 “ rock for youth! When a young man once gives
 “ himself up to voluptuousness, every duty will soon
 “ become neglected and violated. What talents bur-
 “ ried in the earth! what fortunes dissipated! and fre-
 “ quently, what injustice and murders are the dreadful
 “ consequences of disordered youth! Therefore the
 “ authors who contribute to these by their licentious
 “ writings, are the scourges of society*.”

And this is an accusation which modern pretended
 philosophers will never be able to clear themselves from
 in the eyes of reasonable and impartial persons. The
 licence of their works must take from them even the
 mask of philosophy; at least if one understand by this
 word *the love of wisdom*, that is, of order, decency,
 and good morals. What are in fact all the philosophi-
 cal works of the age upon morality?—Monstrous pro-
 ductions, which cannot do otherwise than inflame and
 lead into error the ardent imagination of youth. What
 well-informed mother, what father of a family, would
 dare to permit their children to read them? The fol-
 lowing are the titles of the most celebrated of these
 works:—*Les Dialogues des Morts de Fontenelle*; a work
 full of pernicious principles, and of which almost all
 the consequences immediately tend to the destruction
 of morals—*Les Lettres Persannes*, where the like live-
 ly descriptions and licentious details are found—The
 book intitled *De L'Esprit* is in this respect still more
 reprehensible, as well as for the morals it contains—*Zadig*, and all the little philosophical tales of this na-

* L'Abbé Gauchat, vol. xii. Lettre sur les Lettres Persannes.

ture—The new *Heloise*—*Histoire philosophique de l'Etablissement des Européens dans les Indes, &c* *.

These are the moral works which have procured their respective authors the reputations of philosopher and sage. Let us add, that these same *sages* have still composed many other works, so licentious, that it is not possible for me to quote you the titles of them. Those who give the name of philosophers to such people, must, by a necessary consequence, have no esteem for morals; therefore the partisans and admirers of modern philosophy are, in general, seen to adopt all the false maxims which seem to justify the errors of love. When such opinions are propagated, all the disorders which come from so dangerous a passion cause no remorse to those who abandon themselves to it, unless extraordinary imprudences produce public and tragical scenes.

Yet infidelity, perjury, perfidy, adultery, are real crimes; and since they are so frequently committed without remorse, it must be believed that either they merit no punishment, or that they will be punished in another life. Love, without doubt, does not inspire weak minds, which it governs, with remorse. People easily persuade themselves that this passion, which owes its violence to an ardent and dissolute imagination, *is an irresistible inclination*; that to combat it, is to wish to deceive *nature itself*; that it is always *justified by its excesses*, and that then it becomes *an interesting and respectable weakness*. Such is the *knowledge* that modern philosophy has communicated to society!—It was necessary to diffuse these pernicious opinions, in order to establish the system of which they are the basis. I will lay immediately before your Highness this monstrous system. To bring it forth, to unveil it, is to destroy it.

* This monstrous work, wherein Heaven, morals, and potentates, are equally insulted, contains a detail of the Bayaderes, whose inconceivable licentiousness has disgusted persons the least delicate upon this subject.

C H A P. IV.

OF THE CONVERSION OF GREAT PROFLIGATES.

ETHERNAL source of truth, religion, is not less sublime in its sacred tenets than in its precepts. Fable tells us, that Prometheus stole fire from heaven; an ingenious emblem, which represents to us a mortal animated by a superior and divine spirit. Religion gives us this supernatural intelligence. Guided by its celestial light, we are able to explain those contradictions and singular appearances found in man: phenomena incomprehensible to human reason, whose causes, metaphysics and philosophy will never develop.

We have seen, in the preceeding chapter, that the man who has committed an atrocious crime, becomes, by that action, incapable of feeling remorse. Nevertheless some profligates, touched with a lively repentance, have been observed to give indubitable proofs of it. There is found in *Les Causes Célèbres*, an example of this kind, as singular as it is striking:—A man had committed a premeditated and deliberate murder, accompanied with horrid circumstances. No trace of his crime remained. The wretch, by a juridical deposition, charged another with this very crime, and declared that he had been an eye-witness of it. Many suborned evidences gave to this calumny the greatest importance: the accuser and the accused were put into prison, and at length it was decided that the first should be put to the rack. He supported it with an unshaken courage, and constantly persisted in his first deposition. He was then set at liberty, and the innocent man was going to be condemned to death; when, all on a sudden, the assassin desired to be conducted into the presence of the judges, and there he declared that he was
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the only author of the crime. He threw himself at the feet of him whom he accused, and bathed them with tears; he flattered himself, he said, that by delivering himself up to a voluntary death, and to the punishment which his offences merited, the God of mercy would be pleased to pardon him. On the morrow, before he was led to execution, he dictated his last will, shewed the same piety, the same repentance, and expired with these sentiments *. It is to be remarked, that this man was of a strong and vigorous constitution; that not only the tortures had not endangered his life, but that he was not even crippled by them; and that he was no sooner disengaged from the cord of the rack than he retracted. What cause then was able to produce so immediate a change, so sudden and surprising a revolution? This monster, stained with the blood of his friend (for such was his first offence) had meditated and executed this assassination with as much reflection as coolness; he had calumniated innocence with an unheard-of audacity, in many confrontations: and, after having borne the tortures of the rack, triumphed over pain, convinced his judges, insured his life, and obtained his liberty, he had only one desire, that of expiating his crimes to the utmost of his power! His soul became at once susceptible of impressions which were the most foreign to those it had ever before felt, of pity, of justice, and of repentance!—A moment before, he suffered, with a ferocious intrepidity, the most frightful torments to save his life, and destroy an innocent man; and then voluntarily devoted himself to death, shame, and the most dreadful of all torments, to justify and preserve innocence!

It is not in the human heart that the cause of this surprising revolution must be sought for; a power must here be acknowledged, which alone has the right of abrogating the laws which it has made; the miracu-

* *Causés Célèbres, Hist. de Gristet ou le Juge prévaricateur.*

ious effects of grace must be confessed ; “ when God
 “ acts according to the laws and ordinary course of
 “ his providence, he keeps, or appears to keep, mea-
 “ sures in supernatural as well as in natural order, he
 “ reconciles himself to our weakness ; for he does not
 “ make saints in a moment, he sanctifies them by little
 “ and little, and sometimes by an insensible progress ;
 “ and conducts them step by step, ’till the perfection
 “ of holiness be consummated. But when he acts
 “ sovereignly, as God, he does not subject himself in
 “ this manner ; he does not prepare the object which
 “ is to serve as the basis of his action *.”

It would be equally presumptive and useless to strive to penetrate the motives which can determine the Supreme Being to bestow the precious gift of his grace on the unnatural heart of an assassin. Perhaps the profligate, of whom I have just spoken, did some meritorious action in the eyes of God, before he committed the crime ; or perhaps God reformed the heart of this murderer, to save a just man ready to perish : however this may be, it is sufficient for us to know, that examples of this kind, although rare, have existed in every age ; that at all times these sudden revolutions have happened, which appear contrary to nature, as in fact they are ; and that such characters or incidents could not be supported in a work of imagination.

I repeat, that one may like that which appears extraordinary, and that one is disgusted with that which appears impossible ; the most profound knowledge of the human heart, far from enabling us to explain such phenomena, serves only to render them still more incomprehensible. That which reflection and philosophy cannot penetrate, religion teaches and unveils to us ; so that in supposing, which cannot be, that there existed an unbeliever, who, deprived of passions and partiality, had made a serious study of religion, this unbeliever would be at least obliged to declare, that all the

* Bourdalou, *Sermon sur la Grace.*

ideas of philosophers upon human nature, leave us in a profound ignorance of the most interesting objects ; and that the Evangelists alone explain, in a sublime and satisfactory manner, the difficulties which ancient and modern philosophy have never been able to resolve, in the great number of systems which they have created. I will present to your Highness, in the following chapter, new proofs of this important truth.

C H A P. V.

OF GRACE; AND OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

ONE thing especially renders incredulity equally condemnable and ridiculous in my eyes; it is the little astonishment caused to an unbeliever by phenomena which can neither be explained nor doubted of, and at the same time the extreme disdain that he affects for persons who are convinced of the truth of religion.—“I can only believe,” says an infidel, “that which I clearly conceive. Why should God require a sacrifice of the reason he has given me? If religion be not an human invention, ought it not to have striking characters, which should make the truth of it known? If these proofs existed, and that it were impossible for me to comprehend their force, could God punish me because I wanted penetration and understanding?”—It is very easy to answer this question. The ignorant, the infidel, and the learned, are equally obliged to believe the reality of many things which the human mind will never conceive. God does not therefore require the sacrifice of our reason, when he gives us to understand that it can neither judge of, nor comprehend him; since upon the least important objects we perceive every day how much our intellects are confined. Religion has all the characters of truth which can convince a sincere and reasonable man. Its proofs exist, are solid and striking: without an extensive understanding one easily conceives their whole force. Uprightness and a love of truth alone are necessary to be a christian. God looks without indignation upon ignorance and folly; he punishes obstinacy, pride, and insincerity only; especially when vices are united to intuitive knowledge and to talents. Whoever shall have made Holy Writ their study, will never entertain a doubt of the certainty of revelation: this knowledge ought to satisfy us, it is
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the only useful one that we can possess. Assured of the truth of religion, what does the not being able to comprehend its mysteries signify to us? I am much less surprised not to be able to conceive the Trinity, than I am to see many philosophers seek in vain the causes of the properties of the load-stone. The infidel would wish that evangelical truths were *geometrically* demonstrated.

If such were the degree of their evidence, the liberty given to man would be only a chimera; having no longer a possibility of blinding himself, he would do without merit all that faith can inspire to those which it sanctifies. God, in creating man free, must, by a necessary consequence, have left him the power of penetrating or of rejecting truth, of depraving himself by false calculations, or of resisting illusions. It is this liberty which gives to virtue a right to rewards, and which is the cause that vice, and frequently even error, ought to be punished.

The impious, who despise religion only because they do not understand it, are as culpable as they are foolish. They know, without doubt, that men of superior genius and profound erudition, have always been convinced of the truth of religion. They cannot then imagine that such men have suffered themselves to be dazzled by frivolous proofs or contemptible arguments. It is well worth while to examine thoroughly a thing of this importance; but to remain, with respect to it, in a voluntary ignorance, by taking the part of incredulity, is the height of stupidity and depravation.

Man was created free; but, since the fall of Adam, he has been more disposed to evil than inclined to good; yet he may still, although fallen from his primitive greatness, perceive all the value of virtue; and, by the force of his reason and knowledge, decide in its favour, and triumph over those passions which alienate him from it. But in all that immediately concerns salvation, his liberty would not be sufficient, he wants the help of grace. A just mind, and self love well understood, are all that are necessary to be what the world calls an up-

right man; while saints and the elect have need of supernatural virtue. If man have not this virtue in him, he may have the merit of wishing and praying for it; and then, if his life be pure, and his prayers ardent, it will be granted to him. God does not refuse his grace to those who have a real desire to obtain it, and frequently he infuses it into hearts which appear least susceptible of receiving it.

We are so dissipated and little capable of reflection, that the things of the world the most wonderful in themselves, and the most incomprehensible, do not affect us if they be repeated. It is thus that we see every day, without astonishment, miraculous effects of grace.—People are seen to pass from licentiousness to austerity; others, who, after having doubted all their lives, change in a moment their sentiments and dispositions. I knew a man of great sense and very high character, whose conversion was brought about by a single word. He was yet in the age of the passions; he had never possessed the least principle of religion; and he prided himself upon being an atheist. One day, in the presence of an ecclesiastic, equally distinguished by his eminent virtues and talents, he affected to brave all decorum, which ought at that instant to have constrained him to have held his tongue at least; and, after having given a detail of his sentiments and opinions, he ironically added, that, according to every appearance, he should never be converted. Ah, exclaimed the ecclesiastic, who till then had been silent, if you could yet hope!—He said no more, he got up and went out. But these words made a deep impression upon the heart of the atheist: he had no difficulty to comprehend their energetic meaning; he felt himself moved and affected; a crowd of new reflections presented themselves to his mind; he longed to see and converse again with the man who had produced in him so strange a revolution. The next day he even went in search of him; he opened to him his heart, asked his advice, hearkened to him with attention, with eagerness; and from that moment renounced for ever the vain sophisms of a false philosophy.

phy. Such is the power of grace, it can produce in a moment the most surprising metamorphoses, and its effects will for ever confound the incredulous observer, who shall be acquainted with the human heart.

“ It is an incontestable maxim of faith, that whoever violates in a single point the law of God, is as much deprived of grace, and is not less a subject of reprobation, than if he had violated every part of it. But it would be as absurd as impious to conclude from this, that measures are no longer necessary to be kept when one is once become a sinner. For,” as Saint Augustin says, “ the more you violate the commandments of God, the more you make him your enemy ; the return to grace becomes more difficult as you increase that treasure of anger which Saint Paul speaks of ; and you ought to expect more punishments in a miserable eternity.—If any principles of religion remain with you, they are more than are necessary to oblige you even not to fall into sin *.”

Let us strive to comprehend all the utility of this important tenet. Let us suppose that three men exist, all of them born with violent passions and vicious inclinations. Let us again suppose the first to be an atheist, the second to be entirely convinced of the truth of revelation, and that the third, without having that lively and pure faith, has notwithstanding a fund of religion, and that he knows the precepts and maxims of christianity. It is evident that the atheist, not being restrained by any power, will give way with transport to all his passions, and fall into the most horrid excesses. The true christian, enlightened by faith, will reform his character and morals. Finally, the third, deprived of the happiness of having a sincere piety, but nevertheless preserving some principles of religion, will without doubt go astray ; but, far from abandoning himself without reserve to his passions, he will combat them

* Bourdalou, *sur l'Amour de Dieu*, tom. iii. du Carême.

frequently, and reproach himself with his weaknesses ; he will know what repentance and remorse are ; the fear of the judgments of God will make him form a thousand virtuous resolutions ; he will not find in vice either agreeableness or repose ; and the hope of returning to that grace which he has lost, will preserve him from those scandalous errors and transports which violent passions united to irreligion produce. Such, therefore, is the happy influence of that dogma of faith, which requires us to believe, that *he who commits a single mortal sin, loses grace, and reduces himself to a state of reprobation, and that in this state he may still aggravate his situation by committing new crimes, since the more he accumulates sin, the more he irritates God, renders his return to grace more difficult, and prepares greater punishments for himself* *. This dogma alone leads the just and pious man, who is penetrated by it, to perfection. It is not sufficient that actions are irreproachable, to preserve grace ; upright intentions, and pureness of soul, are still necessary. This tenet, which sanctifies the christian, calls back, restrains, and converts the sinner. It makes virtue sublime, and weakens the power of vice. What must be the reflections of the sinner ? Death may surprise him ; if he die in this state he is eternally miserable. This idea imbitters all the deceitful pleasures which seduce him ; he has not sufficient courage to subdue his inclinations ; he implores the aid of Heaven to obtain it ; he makes sacrifices, and does even good actions ; he sighs for his errors, and perceives himself in so violent a situation, that he is absolutely obliged to renounce the vicious courses which cause him so much agitation, fear, and

* Nevertheless it must be observed, that a man, in losing grace, preserves sometimes rays of spiritual light which come from God. Grace is properly the knowledge of what is good, united to the will and power of inclining to it. Spiritual light alone then is not grace, nor is it sufficient for salvation. Yet the sinner who preserves it is not totally abandoned by God. This will be more clearly explained at the end of this chapter.

remorse.

remorse. What are the precepts of philosophy, which could produce such effects upon weak and vicious men? They would be sought for in vain; and philosophers themselves agree, that, to repress vice, religion is more useful than philosophy could be: but it is not less so to the perfection of virtue, and it is still by the doctrine of grace that man arrives at this end. The faithful Christian has all these to fulfil, without pomp or vanity; he attributes all his good actions to the force which he receives from grace; he knows that humility can alone preserve to him this precious gift; the happiness of possessing it only, inspires him with a soft sentiment of gratitude, and the fear of losing it makes him modest and indulgent to those weaknesses from which he is exempt. It is thus that he is virtuous without pride: so pure and perfect is virtue. Do philosophers, either in their writings or conduct, present to us such a model?

I have already observed to your Highness, that the ridiculousness and inconsistency of the mind and heart, which appear incomprehensible to philosophy, are admirably explained by faith. It is certainly inconceivable that a man, who has been led away by his passions, does not change his opinion when the errors and inclinations of his youth have left him. When the end of life approaches, the idea of annihilation becomes terrible;—insupportable: the career is almost at an end;—another step and it is fulfilled.—Man borders upon the tomb, which is half open, and finishes all. Ah! can the atheist consider this deadly prospect, without horror and despair? Can he say to himself, with composure, *I shall soon cease to exist; I shall soon love no more! my mind, ready to be annihilated, will soon lose for ever all its faculties; I must renounce, without any prospect of ever enjoying them again, not only the objects which are dear to me, but I must lose even my affections?* How happens it that these reflections, so afflicting, do not lead at least to doubt? Nobody has ever pretended, not even the most impious, that there were demonstrative proofs against the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Incre-

dulity is only founded upon what it calls a great probability. But, at an age when the passions cease to combat religion, one ought to perceive how absurd it is, in a thing of such importance, not to take the most sure side. Undeceived from all human illusions, if the hope of another life was one, it would be natural to adopt it. In old age, religion has no longer a sacrifice to demand: it offers then consolations and a sublime hope only; it requires nothing painful; it assures present tranquillity, and promises immortal happiness. Finally, it is religion only which can soften the bitterness of this epocha of life; when man, having run his course, vainly regrets the past, tremblingly enjoys the present, and sees no more what is to come. Religion, in this awful moment, re-animates the oppressed and humiliated soul, and elevates the extinguished imagination: it shews eternity beyond the tomb; it discovers a beneficent God ever ready to forgive, and whose infinite bounty is pleased to give to him who repents, the same reward which his justice destines to innocence. According to these reflections, one cannot conceive how an old man can be impious; yet more than one example of this has been seen. Let us hearken to religion; that will explain to us this phenomenon.

“ It is an incontestible truth that God obscures
 “ sometimes man’s understanding; and, when this ob-
 “ scurity enters into the order of divine decrees, it is,
 “ according to faith, an effect of sin, because it is one
 “ of the pains with which God punishes sinners. But
 “ God, eternal and essential truth, can never be the
 “ author of falsehood: and God, as he is, can never
 “ cease to be a faithful God. If he darkens our un-
 “ derstanding, it is by means of privation, and not of
 “ action; it is by with-holding his light, and not by
 “ impressing us with error; it is by abandoning us to
 “ our own darkened state, and to the suggestions of the
 “ wicked; not by giving us a false light. And more-
 “ over, according to the opinion of the same Saint
 “ Augustin, whose doctrine the council of Trent has
 “ proposed to us for a rule in this particular, one ought
 “ to

“ to conclude, that God never darkens men’s under-
 “ standings in this life, so as to leave them absolutely,
 “ deprived of the light of his grace, because men would
 “ fall thereby into an absolute inability to keep the law,
 “ and that it would become impracticable to them :
 “ and God, supremely just, wise, and good, never re-
 “ quires of us any thing impossible. Therefore he
 “ leaves us sufficient light, if not to walk in the way of
 “ salvation; at least to seek it; if not to act, at least
 “ to pray; if not to know, at least to doubt. . . .
 “ What then does God do to make us fall into dark-
 “ ness and to punish us? Nothing else than to with-
 “ draw himself from us, and to leave us to ourselves.
 “ God, when we irritate him, deprives us of the light
 “ of his grace; and it is the loss of this light which
 “ causes our spiritual blindness. This blindness, thus
 “ explained, is the most redoubtable effect of the
 “ avenging justice of God; the most rigorous chastise-
 “ ment that God can inflict upon sinners; that which
 “ approaches nearest to his reprobation, and what may
 “ be said to be already a reprobation anticipated.

“ The blindness into which God permits us to fall,
 “ in consequence of our crimes, is a pure evil without
 “ any mixture of good: all the other evils of life are;
 “ it is true, chastisements of sin, but these are, if we
 “ please, a means of salvation.—It is our ills,” says
 Saint Chrysostom, “ which purify by afflicting us,
 “ which chastise and serve us as trials, which assist us
 “ to enter again into ourselves, which detach us from
 “ created objects, and force us to return to God. But
 “ blindness is a sterile evil, from which we can reap no
 “ advantage far from effacing our sins, it increases
 “ them; far from subduing our hearts, it revolts
 “ them; far from appeasing God, it provokes him to
 “ anger;—it has all the evil of pain without having the
 “ least salutary effect.—Who ought not to be seized
 “ with terror, on thinking that there is a sin which
 “ God has marked as the last limits of his grace! I
 “ say, of that grace, without which we can never in-
 “ sure our salvation? What is this sin? I cannot be

“ acquainted with it. After what number of sins will
 “ it come? It is what I am ignorant of. Of what
 “ nature, of what species is it? Another mystery for
 “ me, &c *.”

According to this definition of *spiritual blindness*, it is possible to conceive that an old man, upon the brink of the grave, may persist in impiety; he is in that state of *anticipated reprobation* which Bourdalou has just described to us; abandoned by God, left to himself, arrived at the last degree of brutishness and stupidity, he braves coolly the frightful danger of a miserable eternity. A being equally foolish and inconceivable, he unites to capriciousness the most extravagant inconsistency; he believes that his soul will be dissolved with his body, and he is not willing that his name should perish: he is afraid of death, yet he calmly considers annihilation: he has no passions nor desires, and he renounces hope! he has that consummate prudence which a long experience necessarily gives to old age; he is no longer influenced in the affairs of life by sentiment or seduction; he acts no longer without reflection; he calculates calmly before he determines, and he chuses always, without effort, that which appears to him to be the most prudent and certain: yet, by a fatal blindness, he makes no use of that prudence in the only affair which is really important to him.—Age deprives him of all appetites and inclinations which religion forbids; what difficulty would he have then in following the laws of that holy religion? and what does not he risk by rejecting them? Darkness must be very profound, to act in this manner against so pressing an interest, at a time when we neither yield to the necessity nor empire of the passions.

* Bourdalou, *Sermon sur l'Aveuglement spirituel*, tome ii. du Carême.

C H A P. VI.

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

ORIGINAL Sin has furnished unbelievers with the matter of their most specious declamations. We cannot believe, say they, that God has imprinted upon innocent babes the stain of the sin of their fathers.—I confess that this mystery is not that which appears to me the most incomprehensible. Adam had no children in his state of perfection; he did not become a father until after his fall; and according to the light of reason alone it appears natural, that from so criminal and corrupted a source, there could be produced nothing but weak, imperfect, and wretched beings.—But what would our not being able to conceive this mystery signify to religion? Are we made to comprehend the views and designs of the Eternal? However, I do not believe that a remark has ever been made, from which more consequences may be drawn in favour of religion than this; that every thing which it presents, repugnant to human reason, relates only to the conduct and designs of God, and never extends to the precepts which he commands us to observe.—When God imposes on us general laws, these laws are conformable, if not to our inclinations, at least to the conscience which he has given us, and to the light of our reason. But even this reason teaches us, that we cannot judge our Creator; therefore all that is relative to his views, designs, and decrees, must be above our understanding; and it is then that man may believe without difficulty that which appears to him incomprehensible.—Has not your Highness found, in your infancy, your institutors strange and inconceivable, because you had not understanding sufficient to penetrate their intentions? How many times have we been obliged to answer to your questions, *It is impossible to give you that explanation:*
you

you are incapable of comprehending an infinity of things very simple to us, but which you cannot conceive? You have reason enough to perceive that you may implicitly believe what we say to you, and that you ought to obey us; think of your ignorance, weakness, and dependance, and you will have neither the ridiculous presumption to pretend to reason as well as we do, nor the foolish pride which excites you to criticise and judge of actions which appear to you strange and unjust, only because it is absolutely impossible that you should conceive either their causes or their motives. Be grateful, docile, and submissive; these are your duties towards us: you cannot neglect them without being guilty of folly and gratitude. If parents and instructors can speak thus to children, does not your Highness think that God should more justly have a right to hold such language to creatures which he has formed? For it is possible to calculate the intellectual difference between a tutor and the child he brings up: but how can the infinite distance which must exist between the supreme intelligence of the Creator, and the feeble reason of man, be measured? In giving your Highness the definition of *spiritual blindness*, and of the dogma upon *grace*, I have proved to you, that these articles of faith serve to our instruction upon the causes of an infinity of odd appearances, which are presented to the human mind. One of the greatest geniuses of the last age has drawn still more important explanations from *Original Sin*. This chapter, *des Pensées de Pascal*, is so fine, that I think myself obliged to recall to your Highness's attention the principal passages and most sublime ideas of it.

* " What religion will teach us our happiness and
 " our duty; the weaknesses which cause us to forsake
 " them; the remedies capable of curing them; and
 " the means of obtaining these remedies? Let us hear
 " what the wisdom of God, which speaks to us in
 " the Christian religion, says upon the subject. It is

* The points in the following passage mark, as in all those which I have quoted, other passages suppressed.

" in

“ in vain, O man, that thou seekest in thyself a re-
 “ medy for thy miseries; all thy knowledge can only
 “ be to know, that it is not in thyself that thou wilt
 “ find either truth or goodness. Philosophers have
 “ promised them to thee in vain. . . . How could
 “ they have given remedies for thy evils, since they
 “ have not so much as known them? The principal
 “ evils are pride, which takes thee from God; and
 “ concupiscence, which attaches thee to the earth;
 “ and they have done little else than cherish one of
 “ these evils at least. If they have given thee God for
 “ thy object, it has only been to exercise thy pride:
 “ they have made thee believe that thou art like unto
 “ him by thy nature; and those who have perceived
 “ the vanity of this pretension, have thrown thee down
 “ another precipice, in giving thee to understand that
 “ thy nature is like unto that of beasts. . . . I have
 “ formed thee, and I am alone able to tell thee what
 “ thou art. . . . I created man holy, innocent, per-
 “ fect; I filled him with light and understanding . . .
 “ but he could not support so much glory without
 “ falling into presumption. He would fain have mov-
 “ ed round his own center, and have been indepen-
 “ dent of my help. He withdrew himself from my
 “ authority, and, making himself equal to me by the
 “ desire of finding happiness in his own breast, I aban-
 “ doned him to his will; and, causing all the creatures
 “ which were under his subjection to revolt against him,
 “ I made them his enemies. . . . The senses, indepen-
 “ dent of reason, and often its masters, carried him in
 “ search of pleasures. Every creature either afflicts,
 “ tempts, or governs him. . . . This is the present
 “ state of man; the happiness of his first nature still
 “ greatly concerns him, and he is overwhelmed by
 “ the misery of his spiritual blindness.
 “ Thou mayest know, from these principles which
 “ I have explained to thee, the cause of many contra-
 “ dictions which have astonished men, and created
 “ divisions among them. Observe all the movements
 “ of grandeur and glory, which the idea of so many
 “ miseries

" miseries is not able to destroy, and judge if their
 " causes be in nature. Know then, proud man, what
 " a paradox thou art to thyself If man had ne-
 " ver been corrupted he would never have had an idea
 " of truth or happiness But we have an idea of
 " happiness, and never shall be able to attain it:
 " we perceive the image of truth, and possess only
 " falsehood; incapable of being absolutely ignorant,
 " or knowing to a certainty: so manifest it is,
 " that we have been in a state of perfection, from
 " which we are unhappily fallen! What is therefore
 " to be inferred from such eagerness and impotence,
 " if it be not that man has heretofore enjoyed real
 " happiness, of which the sign and empty traces only
 " remain; which he strives in vain to fill up with every
 " thing that surrounds him, by seeking in things ab-
 " sent the consolation which those present do not af-
 " ford; and that both one and the other are incapable
 " of giving to him, because the immense gulph can-
 " not be filled up but by an infinite and unchangeable
 " object? It is astonishing, that the most unknown
 " mystery to us, that of the transmission of original
 " sin, should be a thing without which we can have
 " no knowledge of ourselves! for certainly there is
 " nothing which shocks our reason more than to say,
 " that the sin of the first man has rendered those cul-
 " pable which, being so far removed from that source,
 " appear incapable of participating of it. . . . And
 " yet, without this most incomprehensible of all mys-
 " teries, we are incomprehensible to ourselves.—The
 " abyss renders the nature of our situation more diffi-
 " cult to be understood; so that man is more incom-
 " prehensible without this mystery, than the mystery
 " itself is inconceivable to man. . . These two states,
 " of innocence and corruption, being open, it is im-
 " possible not to know them. Let us follow our own
 " impulses, observe ourselves, and see if we shall not
 " find among us living characters of both kinds.—
 " Would there be so many contradictions in a simple
 " subject? This duplicity of man is so visible, that
 " some

“ some persons have thought that we had two souls;
 “ a simple subject appeared to them incapable of such
 “ sudden transitions, from an immoderate presumption,
 “ to a horrid dejection of mind . . . For my
 “ part, I confess, that the Christian religion no sooner
 “ discovers the principle, that the nature of man
 “ is corrupted and fallen from God, than our eyes become
 “ opened so as to see every where the character
 “ of this truth. For nature is such, that it marks
 “ every where the loss of God, both in and out of
 “ man. Under this divine knowledge what have men
 “ been able to do, except to elevate themselves, by
 “ the interior sentiment which remains with them of
 “ their past greatness; or to abase themselves, by the
 “ consideration of their present weakness? for not seeing
 “ truth entirely, they could not arrive at perfect
 “ virtue. . . . They could not shun both pride and
 “ idleness, which are the two sources of every vice . . .
 “ If they knew the excellence of man, they were ignorant
 “ of his corruption; so that they avoided idleness,
 “ but lost themselves in pride: and if they discovered
 “ the infirmities of nature, they did not know its
 “ dignity: they might well avoid vanity, but it was
 “ by precipitating themselves into despair.—Hence
 “ come the different sects of Stoics and Epicureans, of
 “ Dogmatists, Academicians, &c. The Christian religion
 “ only has been able to remove these two vices
 “ It teaches the just, which it raises to the
 “ participation of divinity itself, that, in this elevated
 “ state, the source of all corruption is still within
 “ them; which renders them, during life, subject to
 “ error, misery, sin, and death. It announces to
 “ the most impious, that they are susceptible of their
 “ Redeemer’s grace. Thus causing those to tremble
 “ whom it justifies, and consoling those whom it
 “ condemns, it tempers, with so much justness, fear with
 “ hope, by that double capacity which is common to
 “ all, of grace and sin, which it abases infinitely more
 “ than reason alone can do, but without causing
 “ despair; and it elevates much more than pride, but
 “ without

" without causing vanity ; making it clearly appear,
 " that being alone exempt from vice and error, it has
 " an exclusive right to instruct and correct mankind.
 " . . . Philosophers did not prescribe sentiments pro-
 " portioned to the two states ; they inspired ideas
 " simply of greatness and meanness ; the former is not
 " the state of man, and the latter is as little so
 " No person is so happy, reasonable, virtuous, and
 " amiable, as a true Christian. With what little pride
 " does a Christian believe himself united to God !
 " with how little abjection does he equal himself to the
 " worms of the earth ! Who can therefore refuse to
 " believe and adore this celestial light ? Is it not most
 " clear that we perceive in ourselves ineffaceable cha-
 " racters of excellence ? and is it not equally true that
 " we experience, every hour, the effects of our deplora-
 " ble condition ? What, therefore, does this chaos,
 " and monstrous confusion, too powerful to be resisted,
 " announce to us, if it be not the truth of these two
 " states * ?"

Let us suppose the wisest and most famed pagan phi-
 losopher, that Socrates had been able to understand this
 reasoning : if he had not been enlightened by grace,
 he would at least have considered this explanation of
 the nature of man, as a system a thousand times more
 satisfactory and useful than all the vain systems pro-
 duced by philosophy.

* *Pensées de Pascal.*

C H A P. VII.

OF THE MYSTERIES.

THE mysteries of religion, having no relation, but to the conduct and intentions of God, must be above all human understanding: and in truth they are incomprehensible, but they are august and affecting; they tend in general to inspire men with the love and gratitude due to the Redeemer of mankind; to the unspotted victim who devoted himself for our salvation. This venerable character belongs only to true religion. Pagan credulity produced no effect but in the imagination; and the indecent absurdity of fable could not but overturn all the principles of morality, and corrupt manners. The faith of a Christian acts only upon the heart; it makes its piety a sublime and tender sentiment; it represents the Supreme Being in the sacred and beloved characters of a Father and Deliverer; it unites us closely with God, by the most august of all the sacraments, which makes the religious man the temple even of the divinity.

Every religion promises to virtue eternal rewards in another life; but the Christian religion is the only one which has promised to man an happiness worthy of an immortal and susceptible soul. The form of man's body, of that mortal spoil which he must one day quit, is certainly not that which distinguishes him from animals; therefore it is evidently a false religion, which only promises him for recompence, after this life, the pleasures of the senses. According to this single reflection I discover easily in Mahomet an impostor; who is equally ignorant of the dignity of man, and of the happiness which is proper for him. Other impostors have promised, to gross and ferocious people, that they should enjoy after death the cruel pleasure of exercising upon their enemies an eternal vengeance. The

Elysian

Elysian fields of the Pagans were, without doubt, created by a more lively and wise imagination. The happy shades, for ever deprived of passions and desires, walked in groves perpetually verdant, and amused themselves in peace. This is the monotonous description of soft leisure and repose, and not of felicity. It is upon earth that man ought to seek for repose, instead of happiness, which he cannot find there; it is upon earth that he ought to moderate his desires, because nothing can satisfy them: finally, it is there that reason prescribes to him not to love to excess any created object, since every passionate attachment, even the most legitimate, is for him an inexhaustible source of mortal inquietudes and devouring pains. Nevertheless, it is not in vain that the Creator has given him that active sensibility which he is incessantly obliged to suppress. The moments of lively and transient happiness which it procures, give him at least an idea of real felicity. He perceives that the power alone of loving can produce it: but will it be by a passionate attachment to frail and imperfect creatures like himself; and with the frightful certainty of being sooner or later separated from them by death—and for ever?—Certainly no. To love with ardour, with transport, and yet without inquietude and jealousy; to find in the object of one's love the only model of perfection; to see it at the height of glory, and absolute sovereign of all that exists: this is the ravishing and sublime idea of supreme felicity; and such is the eternal futurity which religion promises to virtue. O you, who alone deserve to be consulted upon the nature of happiness made for man; you who alone have a right to conceive and define it: susceptible souls, do not these divine promises fulfil all the wishes you can form? Could it be possible that you should not be attracted by a religion which gives you such hopes?—For my part, I find in the description of eternal happiness all that can charm the mind, exalt the imagination, and affect the heart. Alas, if God deigns to pardon me my weaknesses and faults, the instant my soul shall be disengaged from its terrestrial bondage, I shall be struck with
the

the piercing and unclouded light of truth ! That instinct peculiar to man, that desire of instruction which weak human knowledge irritates without satisfying, that eager curiosity will be fully gratified ; I shall know all, comprehend all ; there will be no more enigmas, obscurities, or mysteries for me ; my existence being thus become immortal, my genius will extend itself, and embrace infinity.——Pure and divine pleasures, if I cannot yet enjoy you, I can at least conceive what your nature is ; you are only the pleasures of the mind ! But how shall I comprehend, how shall I represent, in its fullest extent, this inexpressible happiness which the immortal soul will enjoy ? the soul, purified and disengaged from its vicious inclinations, and self-created passions ; that soul whose energy will be proportioned to its boundless duration !——I shall see the Creator of heaven and the universe ; the source and model of true perfection : I shall be capable of being inspired with all the affection, gratitude and admiration that are due to him ; I shall be encompassed by his supreme glory ; I shall love with an ardor of which it is impossible we can have a just idea : because we have loved weak, changeable, imperfect and perishable beings only : my love of God will be, like himself, immutable, eternal, and infinite ; and this love will be the foundation of my glory, as well as my happiness ! Fear and conflicts will be no more ; I shall love securely, passionately, and for ever !——The religion which promises me such recompenses is certainly the true religion ! Reason would be satisfied with this one proof. All other religions have promised pleasures only, independent of the soul, or repose ; he who formed the heart of man could alone discover to him the source and image of true felicity. When he informs me of my destiny, I know the voice of my Creator ; he promises me the only good which can fulfil and satisfy the desire of my soul.

C H A P. VIII.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE CREATION, AND UPON
PROVIDENCE.

I AM going to present to your Highness a series of reflections which, perhaps, will appear to be whimsically connected; but it was so they presented themselves to my mind, in a situation which will never be effaced from it.—Above twelve years ago, as I was travelling in a foreign country, one evening, near the end of the month of July, I was going, according to custom, before I went to bed, to make notes in my journal, but it was impossible for me to write. I had in the course of the day admired a multitude of surprising objects, of celebrated monuments; the recollection of these master-pieces of art excited in me a crowd of new reflections, but in so confused a manner that I could neither reduce them to order nor describe them; and in other respects the state of my mind still added to the confusion of my ideas. I had that very day received advices which, without afflicting me, agitated me violently. My heart and mind equally affected, and by objects which had no kind of connection between them, my ideas crossed and embarrassed each other, were greatly disordered, and I found myself in a painful situation, much resembling that of a delirium. At length I arose, left my chamber, and went upon a great terrace which overlooked the sea. The gentle swell of the sea, the serenity of the air, the profound calmness of the night, produced in me sensations which I had never before experienced: I felt myself agitated, and more disposed to give a serious attention to such objects only as were most interesting to me; I forgot my journal, and what I had seen in the course of the day, and all my thoughts were turned towards France.—After my imagination had exhausted that which

which it had presented the most interesting, I fell into a fit of vague and profound musing: how long it continued I am unable to judge; I only remember that I thought of a thousand different things; but superficially, and without the power of reflection, or the desire of resting upon one idea in preference to another. It was no longer that disorder of the thoughts, produced by an inward perturbation, or the vivacity of imagination; it was, on the contrary, a lassitude, a torpor which suspended all the faculties of my mind: it was the peaceful confusion of chaos.—The first rays of light withdrew me from this kind of slumber: I remarked, with astonishment, that I could distinguish every object that surrounded me; they were all new to me, having been an inhabitant of this place but for a few hours, and not having seen it except by night: I knew nothing of the terrace upon which I was; therefore, the magnificent spectacle which presented itself to my view, caused me as much surprise as extacy. From one side I discovered the sea, and a landscape equally majestic, pleasant, and variegated; from the other I saw, nearer to me, delightful gardens, statues, obelisks, triumphal arches, colonades of marble and of porphyry: in short, I contemplated, at once, all that nature and the arts could present the most awful and agreeable. It seemed to me that this view gave me a new existence: enthusiasm succeeded to languor; I never in my life felt so lively an impression: the agitation of my mind was calmed; the only result of my reflections and musing was a disposition to a tender sensibility, which rendered me capable of perceiving and thinking more forcibly. I took my pocket-book, and sat down at the foot of a palm-tree, and in that situation, discovering all the different objects which had so greatly excited my admiration, I wrote the ideas which the contemplation of the surprising picture before my eyes inspired me with. It is this trifle, written so rapidly, and in my youth, that I have inserted in this work: in order that it might not appear to be misplaced, I have been obliged to give an account of the situation and sentiments
which

which produced this singular connection of ideas. I might have suppressed this detail, by changing the form of the reflections; but I find, in this trifle, an original turn, precisely because it has not been *composed*: I give it therefore, nearly as it was written.—I have added a little, otherwise I have made no alteration in it.

“ What a picture!—Here the most astonishing
 “ productions of art; there all that nature can pre-
 “ sent the most charming and majestic! How have
 “ objects, merely material, a right to excite in my soul
 “ so lively and soft a sensation? Is not that which is
 “ pleasing and agreeable to the eye, frivolous, when
 “ considered simply in itself, without joining to it an
 “ idea of utility; or does it deserve to inspire admira-
 “ tion? Yes, without doubt, beauty and magnificence
 “ are attributes of God; he has imprinted this cha-
 “ racter upon his works, and all that marks the power
 “ of a Being supremely just and beneficent, produces
 “ in the soul a delicious sensation. Works produced
 “ by art prove the understanding of man, and his su-
 “ periority over animals, who are only endowed with
 “ a blind instinct; therefore these superb monuments
 “ are really worthy of admiration. But what is that
 “ which is sublime, great and excellent? That which
 “ strikes, that which astonishes; as that vast sea, that
 “ chain of mountains, those enormous rocks, that fine
 “ sky! Ah, what ravishment and transport, if they
 “ were seen for the first time!—These palaces and
 “ pyramids are beautiful, without doubt, but how in-
 “ ferior is their beauty to that which nature presents
 “ us with in its grand performances! How many
 “ rules are necessary to be known in order to appre-
 “ ciate the merit of these elegant pieces of architec-
 “ ture! and without the least knowledge of astronomy
 “ or of natural history, we may contemplate, with en-
 “ thusiasm, the heavens and the earth. Deprived of
 “ the help of human sciences, we are ignorant of and
 “ despise the greatest part of the master-pieces produced
 “ by the genius of man: the work of God alone can
 “ equally

“ equally please the ignorant and the philosopher.—
 “ O you, on whom nature has bestowed gifts, per-
 “ haps more rare and brilliant than desirable ; a lively
 “ and prolific imagination, penetration, extent of un-
 “ derstanding, justness of judgment, and finally a great
 “ genius ! let your talents become useful, compleat a
 “ noble career ; you, who are capable of being the
 “ *beneficent friends* of humanity, and know how to pre-
 “ serve yourselves from foolish pride ! Man of genius,
 “ what is thy design ? that of shining, astonishing, of
 “ exciting universal admiration ! Vain projects ! If
 “ thou soar above me, if I be not able to follow
 “ and approach thee, thy merit will be lost to me :
 “ I no longer admire the brilliant plumage of the
 “ gay light-winged bird, when once it has elevated
 “ itself above the clouds ; in vain, being nearer
 “ to the sun, does it receive from its light a daz-
 “ zling brightness ; an immense interval separates us ;
 “ its beauty cannot charm me, it no longer exists in
 “ my eyes. What wilt thou therefore gain by placing
 “ thyself upon pinnacles inaccessible to others ? Of
 “ what use will thy superiority over me be to thee ?
 “ My weakness will even deprive thee of my homages ;
 “ and if I be capable of perceiving all thy merit, I am
 “ almost thy equal ; by appreciating thee justly, I rise
 “ to thy elevation. Thou wilt find sincere admirers,
 “ and those worthy of judging of thy merit, amongst
 “ thy rivals only—Will they have greatness of soul
 “ enough to praise thee with candour ? It is true that
 “ their hatred and mean envy will insure thy fame :
 “ the public will soon celebrate thy success ; but the
 “ blind and stupid multitude lavishes a frivolous incense
 “ upon its heroes, without knowing their talents and
 “ deserts, or the merit it exalts. Are such suffrages
 “ worthy of a devouring desire to obtain them ?——
 “ What weakness and folly is there in this wish : *I*
 “ *could wish that my actions and my works should become*
 “ *the subject of astonishment and admiration in all man-*
 “ *kind.*——No—There exists in nature but the works
 “ of the Creator alone, which can be admired without
 “ being comprehended. What just proportion is there
 “ between

“ between the works of God, the productions of men,
 “ and those of animals? It is impossible to reflect
 “ upon them, or put them in parallel, without per-
 “ ceiving distinctly the infinite difference produced by
 “ these three principles—*Eternal and supreme wisdom*
 “ *which has created all; animated matter of an immortal*
 “ *soul; and matter only organized.* This is evidently
 “ demonstrated by the habitations of the beaver, by the
 “ Pantheon, the church of St. Peter at Rome, the colon-
 “ nades of the Louvre, and all the master-pieces of hu-
 “ man art, being compared with the creation. Why
 “ has God, who can infinitely vary every thing, been
 “ pleased that there should be such striking affinities, and
 “ sometimes exact resemblances, between the organiza-
 “ tion of man and that of brutes, and even that these
 “ should be found among plants and animals? Botanists
 “ discover very sensible ones even in the singular man-
 “ ner in which certain vegetables are produced. It is to
 “ prove to man, that there exists within him a princi-
 “ ple, which belongs neither to his organization nor
 “ exterior form. Indeed man, encompassed by all the
 “ combinations of matter, has need only of his eyes
 “ and a clear judgment, to perceive that the most won-
 “ derful combinations can only give *motion and sensation*,
 “ and will never produce *reason and thought*. How
 “ beautiful is nature, to those who know how to study
 “ it and reflect! ————— In literature and arts, *unity*
 “ *of design* is recommended, *harmony and agreement of*
 “ *the whole, correspondence in all the parts, variety in the*
 “ *details, but without confusion, motley appearances, or*
 “ *any thing ill-timed.* These principles ought to be
 “ followed, they are drawn from nature. What unity
 “ of design in the sublime work of the creation! all
 “ has relation to man, to the only being formed to
 “ know and adore his Creator; all that exists, was
 “ created to supply his wants, satisfy his desires, serve
 “ his pleasures, or to prove and instruct him, to correct,
 “ reward and punish him. What a *variety* in the
 “ works of God! what magnificence without profu-
 “ sion, and what simplicity! The charm and richness
 “ of

“ of detail, do not destroy the harmony of the whole :
 “ these fields, covered with flowers, are enamelled with
 “ all the different shades of the most brilliant colours ;
 “ but I perceive without distinguishing them, and their
 “ splendor does not obscure the sweet accord of those
 “ verdant shades and that azure sky. Finally, what
 “ an admirable *correspondence* between all the parts
 “ which compose the universe ! an universal and unin-
 “ terrupted chain assembles and unites all the material
 “ substances, and every being. Various species, dif-
 “ ferent kinds, are all united together by something
 “ intermediate, so that *if one of these species became*
 “ *extinct the would be scarcely perceptible* *.

“ No *vacuums* or irregularities are to be found in
 “ nature ; it has produced no one thing separately or
 “ unconnected with another.—How many shades and
 “ gradations approach and join those three states of
 “ matter, which Naturalists have named *kingdoms* !
 “ The human eye cannot discern all these shades, but
 “ it perceives those which are the most striking ; it dis-
 “ covers some of them every day † ; enough to prove
 “ the existence of that admirable chain : that which
 “ proves it demonstratively is, that there exists no class
 “ of plants, trees, or animals, which has not some
 “ analogy with another species ; because each class,
 “ instead of being a perfect work, is but a small part
 “ of one that is as immense as it is wonderful. In
 “ each species of plant there is one, the half only of
 “ which belongs to it, whose other half begins a dif-
 “ ferent species. The same may be said of every
 “ animal, man alone excepted : it is in this that one
 “ of the strongest proofs of the dignity of man and of
 “ the immortality of the soul may be discovered.—
 “ Man has nothing in common with animals but a

* M. de Buffon.

† It is not more than twenty years ago that the disco-
 very was made of the *Zoophytes*, or animal plants, which
 join the animal to the vegetable kingdom ; as the *Vesper-
 tilio* or *Bat* is the gradation between quadrupels and
 birds ; the *Beaver* between fishes and quadrupeds, &c.

VOL. I.

D

“ perishable

“ perishable body, therefore his affinity with them is
 “ only exterior. It is not the most sensible, indus-
 “ trious, or intelligent animal, it is neither the dog nor
 “ the beaver, which forms the gradation from a brute
 “ to a man; it is the ape: this is an animal formed
 “ like man himself, and which nevertheless can nei-
 “ ther build, till the earth, nor work; it is an animal
 “ which, with almost a human head, is deprived of
 “ speech, although many other animals can speak. Is
 “ this the species which would be able to supply the
 “ human species, reduce other animals to obedience,
 “ and reign upon the earth? Therefore this great
 “ chain of beings stops at man; and is interrupted
 “ for man only: he is the only *finished work*; he is
 “ alone not comprehended in the general plan of mate-
 “ rial works! he makes no part of that material all!
 “ he is connected with it but by his body: this body
 “ must perish; but his intellectual faculties, which are
 “ given to himself only, those faculties which procure
 “ him the sovereignty of the earth, and an unlimited
 “ empire over animals, even those which are infinitely
 “ superior to him in physical force; finally, those
 “ faculties independent of matter,——will never be de-
 “ stroyed by the dissolution of a frail body that has no-
 “ thing in common with them. O mad blasphemer, who
 “ does not blush at equalling brutes to man, you who
 “ see in the creation only the fantastical work of
 “ chance; it is then in vain that the paternal goodness
 “ of the Supreme Being multiplies around you the pro-
 “ digies which attest and prove his power, his wisdom,
 “ and the immortality of the soul! You shut your
 “ eyes against these clear lights, and you go astray in
 “ the *ways of darkness*; you dare to complain of
 “ meeting with nothing but obscure routes! But
 “ your blindness is voluntary, and will cease when you
 “ shall seriously desire it. Look into your hearts,
 “ interrogate them; open your eyes, look around
 “ you; reflect, study nature, and you will soon see
 “ the impenetrable veil, which hides from you the
 “ truth, disappear. But to admire the Author of
 “ nature,

" nature, as much as human understanding admits of,
 " it is not sufficient to contemplate his works, to know
 " their affinities, connections and differences; it is
 " still necessary to reflect upon the physical and moral
 " laws which govern the universe. The ancients and
 " some moderns, have eloquently declaimed against the
 " cruelty of man, who is fed with the flesh of animals;
 " but the prodigious multiplication of animals has
 " rendered its use necessary *, since without this vio-
 " lent means an infinity of species would cover the
 " whole surface of the sea and earth, and replunge the
 " creation into chaos. It is even a law of nature that
 " all superabundant animals are to be destroyed; this
 " law gives me new light upon the destination of man;
 " it teaches me why man, the most useful and perfect
 " of beings, is, nevertheless, that which increases the
 " least; it is, that being necessary to the creation, his
 " species is never to become *superabundant*. Animated
 " by divine breath, which gives him sentiment and
 " reason, he is precious in the eyes of the Creator;
 " and, being made to reign upon earth, a sufficiency

* Que l'on considère un instant quelques unes de ces
 espèces inférieures qui servent de pâture aux autres;
 celles des harengs par exemple. Ils viennent par milliers
 s'offrir à nos pêcheurs, et après avoir nourri tous les mon-
 stres des Mers du Nord, ils fournissent encore à la sub-
 sistance de tous les peuples de l'Europe pendant une partie
 de l'année. Quelle population prodigieuse parmi ces ani-
 maux! et s'ils n'étoient en grande partie détruits par les
 autres, quels seroient les effets de cette immense multipli-
 cation! Eux seuls couvriroient la surface entière de
 la mer. M. DE BUFFON.

Consider for a moment some of the inferior species,
 which serve as food to the others, that of herrings for
 instance; they come by thousands and offer themselves to
 our fishermen; and, after having fed all the monsters of
 the North Seas, they furnish subsistence to the people of
 Europe during a part of the year. What a prodigious in-
 crease in this single species! and if it was not in part de-
 stroyed by the others, what would be the consequence of
 this immense multiplication? herrings alone would cover
 the entire surface of the sea.

M. DE BUFFON.

“ of space is necessary to that end. — Let him be
 “ human, and his species can never become too nu-
 “ merous : the extent of the universe is without
 “ doubt proportioned to the number of inhabitants
 “ which can cultivate, embellish, and occupy it, if
 “ all men were just and pacific. Alas ! I discover
 “ many extensive countries uninhabited ! Without
 “ vice, crimes, ambition and avarice, no deserts
 “ would be seen. — Man, ungrateful, fallen, de-
 “ graded, vicious, was justly banished from those
 “ delightful places, where the fertile earth produced,
 “ without cultivation, nothing but delicious fruits and
 “ wholesome plants : where gentle and docible animals
 “ were naturally obedient to him whom the Creator
 “ had given them for master. What an admirable
 “ proportion is there between man’s punishment and
 “ his crime ! If God, in exiling him, had been pleased
 “ to explain to him his designs, he would have said to
 “ him—I made thee from dust, and thou hast wished
 “ to become my equal ! A delicious abode, a land
 “ ever fertile, was necessary to an innocent creature,
 “ animated by my divine breath ; for thee I created
 “ nature perfect, and animals which had no other in-
 “ stinct than that of a constant obedience to thy de-
 “ sires : but thou hast dared to revolt against thy Fa-
 “ ther and Benefactor, and I have made all nature to
 “ revolt against thee. — Corrupted by ingratitude and
 “ pride, thou art no longer worthy to inhabit the
 “ fortunate asylum of innocence : a degraded creature,
 “ but whom repentance and my paternal love may
 “ again raise up, the place of thy exile is conformable
 “ to thy new state, like thyself offering and uniting
 “ contrarieties. Containing in its bosom the inex-
 “ haustible sources of good and evil, the earth over
 “ which thou art going to reign shall produce poisons
 “ and wholesome fruits : there shall be seen profound
 “ gulphs, horrid precipices, and fertile and delightful
 “ vallies ; useful animals and venomous serpents, fero-
 “ cious tygers, and lions thirsty of blood ! — Such will
 “ be hereafter the empire proper for thee ; every thing
 “ there

“ there will constantly place before thy eyes my justice and thy chastisement, my power and my goodness. Condemned to death, and to rise again to eternity, thou must not expect upon the earth a pure and uninterrupted happiness, which thou canst not enjoy without being united to me: but thou may’st there taste of the charms of peace and sweet tranquillity. Love justice and labour, be equitable, and shun idleness; thou wilt then become really the sovereign and legislator of that earth created for thee; thou wilt destroy all its pernicious productions, and improve those which are useful. If men be pacific, their numbers will increase, and will become sufficient to inhabit the whole earth: blest with a creative genius, a noble attribute of an immortal soul, they will be able, by inhabiting every part of the universe, to rule over nature, to destroy and annihilate its pernicious productions, and force it to multiply the precious germs of a beneficent fecundity! Finally, they will be able to level mountains and fill up precipices; to stop the course of impetuous torrents, and turn away floods; to reduce to obedience useful animals, and to exterminate every offensive species.—Ungrateful man! such are the rights which I leave thee, and the power which I grant thee: but if, hearkening only to a vain ambition and a blind cupidity, thou become vicious and barbarous; if thy cruel hand be armed against thy brethren, thy less numerous species will have no longer this unlimited power over nature; thou wilt reign only in some countries, and thou wilt lose the universal empire which toil and virtue alone can insure to thee. Thou wilt then give up half the earth, uncultivated and a desert, to ferocious animals and frightful reptiles—to venomous plants, which, multiplying themselves without obstacle, will be spread over the face of the globe, and be perpetuated there for ever. Such is the decree of my justice: I have condemned thee to labour, I have commanded thee to love thy fellow creatures; it is on these terms

“ alone that thou shalt become absolute sovereign of the
 “ universe.—If in the course of ages, the scourges,
 “ which nature may produce, shall be equal to the
 “ good which she shall present thee, it will be thy own
 “ fault; thou must have permitted or sought after it :
 “ do not then complain of thy Creator, blame thyself
 “ only, and confess the consequences and equitable
 “ punishment of thy vices and folly.—O eternal voice
 “ of justice and of truth, thou penetratest my soul !
 “ When I study nature, when I reflect upon its laws,
 “ upon the destiny of man, upon the caprice of the
 “ human heart, upon Providence, it is thou who
 “ speakest to me, who answerest me. Philosophy pre-
 “ sents to me doubts and errors only ; it engages au-
 “ dacioussly in the intricate windings of an obscure la-
 “ byrinth : not being able to distinguish objects there,
 “ it forms chimerical ones, and, willing to seize fugi-
 “ tive shadows, it follows phantoms produced by the
 “ imagination.—Certainly, man cannot know himself
 “ without the succours of religion ; every thing leads
 “ an upright heart and a reflecting mind to this sacred
 “ principle. The study and contemplation of nature,
 “ the knowledge of the human heart, and a profound
 “ meditation upon the divine decrees of Providence
 “ especially, all are united to demonstrate to us the
 “ sublime truths which religion requires us to believe.
 “ I perceive in all these the effects of that admirable
 “ Providence. Vice, in general, cannot escape the
 “ punishment it merits ; an equitable punishment, and
 “ admirably suited to faults and crimes. God was
 “ pleased that it should be thus ; it is the moral lesson
 “ which, by experience, he gives to men : let each
 “ man reflect particularly upon his past life, he will
 “ find that all his good actions, all his sacrifices to vir-
 “ tue, have had their reward ; that all his neglects of
 “ duty have been punished. These grand examples
 “ are presented in a still more striking manner in his-
 “ tory. Such is the order of things : but this law is
 “ general only, it is not absolute ; and it is here that
 “ the divine wisdom of the Supreme Legislator shines
 “ with

" with redoubled lustre : he has been pleased that there
 " should ever be exceptions to this law, in order to
 " prove to men in all ages, that there exists another
 " life, where the criminal, unpunished in this, will
 " find chastisement, and the innocent oppressed, re-
 " wards. And, by a decree of Providence, worthy
 " of our greatest admiration, these exceptions are fre-
 " quent enough to demonstrate clearly these important
 " truths ; and they are at the same time too rare to
 " trouble the general order, and to destroy these grand,
 " true, and salutary principles, that vice is equally
 " pernicious and contemptible, that personal interest
 " alone ought to keep us from it, and that virtue is as
 " beneficial as it is amiable."

C H A P. IX.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

PHILOSOPHERS, struck with the harmony of the universe, and the admirable laws of Providence, have maintained, that nothing could be better and more perfect than the order of things which exist. Others have remarked the disorder and confusion only in nature. The first, in saying *All is well, Whatever is, is right*, have seen but the general mass; the second, on the contrary, have been willing to consider the whole, and have fixed their attention but on some particulars. The former, in their judgment, have not comprehended very rare exceptions; the latter have judged upon exceptions only, whose number they have even excessively exaggerated.

Certainly, *all would be well*, if man made a reasonable use of his liberty; if he knew how to govern his passions, and was upright and religious. Yet the vices of man, which produce so many evils, cannot disturb the general harmony; and this is what a modern author has admirably proved, in an excellent work, intitled, *Etudes de la Nature*. As your Highness cannot yet read with advantage this work, I will make you acquainted with some of the author's ideas, and some of his answers to the *objections against Providence drawn from the disorders of the globe*.

‘ We can know that only which nature makes us
 ‘ perceive, and we can judge of her works in the place
 ‘ and at the time only of her shewing them to us.—
 ‘ All that we imagine farther, presents us nothing but
 ‘ contradiction, doubt, error, or absurdity. I do not
 ‘ except even the plans of perfection which we conceive.
 ‘ For instance, this one tradition, common to every
 ‘ people, supported by the testimony of holy writ, and
 ‘ founded

‘ founded upon a natural idea, that we have lived in a
 ‘ better order of things, and that we are destined to
 ‘ another which will surpass it. Yet we can know no-
 ‘ thing either of one or the other. It is impossible
 ‘ for us either to increase or diminish that in which we
 ‘ live, without making our situation worse. All that
 ‘ nature has done in it is necessary; even pain and
 ‘ death are witnesses of its goodness. Without pain
 ‘ we should bruise ourselves, without perceiving it, at
 ‘ every step*. Without death, new beings could not
 ‘ be produced into the world; and if we suppose that
 ‘ those which exist at present could become eternal,
 ‘ their eternity would bring on the ruin of generati-
 ‘ ons †, and all the ties of conjugal, filial, and paternal

* Mallebranche a dit, si l'ame n'appercevoit que ce qui se passe dans sa main quand elle se brule; si elle n'y voyoit que le mouvement et la separation de quelques fibres, elle ne s'en mettroit gueres en peine; et même elle pourroit quelquefois, par caprice, y prendre quelque satisfaction; comme ces fantasques qui se divertissent à tout rompre dans leurs emportemens et dans leurs débauches Il s'ensuit de-là que c'est avec une grande sagesse que l'auteur de l'union de notre ame avec notre corps a ordonné que nous sentions de la douleur, quand il arrive au corps quelque changement capable de lui nuire, comme quand une aiguille entre dans la chair, ou que le feu en separe quelque partie; &c.—De la Recherche de la Vérité, tom. 1. (3).

Mallebranche says, if the soul were sensible of the action only of what passes in the hand when it is burnt; if it saw but the motion and separation of some fibres, it would be little affected by them, and would through caprice, have even a pleasure therein, like that of mean humorists, when they divert themselves by breaking, in their transports and debauches, every thing upon which they can lay their hands From this it appears to be with great wisdom that the author of the union of the soul with the body has so ordered it, that we perceive from pain, when it happens to the body, some change capable of doing it harm, as when a needle enters the flesh, or that fire separates some part of it, &c.

† Since the earth is limited, if men who inhabit it did not die, it would be necessary that they should have no children. Ah! what pleasure can be imagined, which may be substituted for that of being a mother, and bringing up sensible and grateful children!

' love, that is to say, the whole system of real happi-
 ' nels It is from human insufficiency that ob-
 ' jections directed against divine Providence arise . . .
 ' If these murmurs came from some poor sailor ; ex-
 ' posed upon the sea to all the revolutions of the at-
 ' mosphere, or from some peasant borne down by the
 ' contempt of society which he nourished, I should not
 ' be astonished ; but our atheists are commonly shelter-
 ' ed from the injury of the elements, and from those
 ' of fortune especially. The greatest part of them
 ' have never travelled. With respect to the evils of
 ' society, they are very wrong in complaining of them,
 ' for they enjoy its greatest homages, after having
 ' broken all its ties by their opinions It is a
 ' moral phenomenon, and which has long appeared to
 ' me inexplicable, to see in every age atheism rise up
 ' among men who have the greatest reason to be satis-
 ' fied with nature ; and superstition among those who
 ' have the greatest reason to complain of it.—It was
 ' in the luxury of Greece and Rome, in the bosom of
 ' the riches of Indostan, in the pomp of Persia, the
 ' voluptuousness of China, and in the abundance of
 ' the capitals of Europe, that the first men who have
 ' dared to deny the divinity made their appearance.
 ' On the contrary, the Tartars, without an asylum, the
 ' savages of America, always starving with hunger,
 ' the negroes, without foresight and without a govern-
 ' ment, the inhabitants of the rude climates of the
 ' north, as the Laplanders, the Esquimaux, the Green-
 ' landers, see Deities every where, even in flint stones.
 ' The rich, having all their wants anticipated by men,
 ' expect nothing more from God They have
 ' lately lost sight insensibly of nature, whose produc-
 ' tions are presented to them disfigured or out of season,
 ' and always as the effects of the art of their gardeners
 ' or their artists. They do not fail also to interpret its
 ' sublime operations by the mechanism of arts which
 ' are the most familiar to them. Hence so many sys-
 ' tems which make the occupations of their authors to
 ' be guessed at. Epicurus, exhausted by voluptu-
 ' ousness,

'ousness, drew his world and his atoms, without pro-
 'vidence, from his apathy: the geometrician forms
 'it with his compass, the chymist with salts, the mi-
 'neralogist produces it from fire; and those who do
 'not apply themselves to any thing, and who are in
 'great number, suppose it to be, like themselves, in
 'chaos, and proceeding with uncertainty. Thus the
 'corruption of the heart is the first source of our er-
 'rors. Afterwards, the sciences, employing in the
 'search of natural things, definitions, principles, and
 'methods clothed with a grand geometrical apparel,
 'seem by this pretended order to regulate those who
 'are in want of being regulated. But if this order ex-
 'isted such as we represent it *, would it be useful to
 'men? would it be sufficient to restrain and console
 'the wretched? and what concern can they have for
 'society which oppresses them, when they have no-
 'thing more to hope for from nature, which abandons
 'them to the laws of impulse? One of the
 'greatest benefactions of Providence towards the ani-
 'mals of the north, is to have clothed them with
 'robes of fur, with long and thick hair, which grows
 'in winter particularly, and falls off in summer
 'Before I had been in the northern countries, I figur-
 'ed to myself, after the laws of our physics, that the
 'earth there must be deprived of plants by the rigour
 'of the cold; I was astonished to see there the grea-
 'test trees I had ever seen in my life, and placed so
 'nearly one to another that a squirrel might run over
 'a great part of Russia, without setting his feet upon
 'the ground, by leaping from branch to branch
 'Forests shelter the lands in the north from cold;
 'and, what is still to be admired, is, that they shelter
 'them in warm countries from heat. These two op-
 'posite effects are produced by the different forms and

* And the author proves how defective this order is,
 and how vicious the methods are. He demonstrates that,
 in the sciences, many principles which are established as
 certain, are doubtful at least, and that an infinity of re-
 ceived hypotheses are evidently false.

' dispo-

' dispositions alone of their leaves. Those of the fir,
 ' larch, pine, cedar, and juniper-trees, in the north,
 ' are strait, glossy, and varnished; their narrowness,
 ' with their varnish, and the multitude of their sur-
 ' faces, reflect about them the heat in a thousand dif-
 ' ferent manners The leaves of several species,
 ' such as those of the fir and birch-trees, are suspend-
 ' ed perpendicularly to their boughs by long and
 ' moveable stalks, so that by the least wind they re-
 ' flect in every direction the rays of the sun, like
 ' mirrors. On the contrary, the palm trees, talipat,
 ' cocoa trees, and bananas, of the south, bear large
 ' leaves, which, on the side next to the earth, are
 ' macerated rather than glazed, and which, in extend-
 ' ing themselves horizontally, form beneath them
 ' great shades, where there is no reflection of heat
 ' The wisdom with which nature has directed the pro-
 ' portions of animals is not less worthy of admiration
 ' If animals be examined, not one of them will
 ' be found defective in its members, if attention be
 ' paid to its manners, and the places wherein it is
 ' destined to live. The long and thick beak of the
 ' toucan, and its tongue made like a feather, were ne-
 ' cessary to a bird which seeks insects dispersed in the
 ' humid sands on the shores of America: a long pick-
 ' axe to dig them out, a large spoon to collect them
 ' together, and a tongue fringed with delicate nerves
 ' to discover its food, were at once necessary to it.
 ' Long legs and a long neck were necessary to the
 ' heron, the stork, the zamana, and other birds which
 ' are found in marshes, and which seek their prey at the
 ' bottom of the waters there. Every animal has its
 ' feet, and mouth or snout, formed in an admirable
 ' manner for the soil it is to go over, as well as for
 ' the aliment on which it is to live*. Nature pro-
 ' duces reasonable compacts only, and makes in ani-

* The author proves the truth of this by an infinity of
 examples; and I regret exceedingly that the compass of
 this work does not permit me to quote them all.

' mals and flowers an assortment of such parts alone as
 ' are proper for the places, air, elements, and uses to
 ' which they are destined. No race of monsters has
 ' ever been produced by its sublime operations
 ' The monsters which are preserved in bottles of spi-
 ' rits of wine, such as little pigs which have the trunk
 ' of an elephant, and children with two heads, which
 ' are shewn to us in cabinets with a mysterious philo-
 ' sophy, prove much less the work of nature, than the
 ' interruption of it. None of these beings have been
 ' able to arrive at perfect maturity; and, far from
 ' indicating that the intelligence which produced them
 ' committed an error, they attest, on the contrary,
 ' the immutability of its wisdom, since it has rejected
 ' them from its plan, by refusing to give them life.
 ' There is in the conduct of nature towards man a
 ' goodness highly worthy of admiration; in forbidding
 ' him, on one part, to change the regularity of its laws
 ' to gratify his caprice, and on the other, frequently
 ' permitting him to disturb its course to supply his
 ' wants. For instance, it makes the ass and the mare
 ' produce the mule, which is so useful in the moun-
 ' tains; and it deprives that animal of the power of
 ' propagation, in order to preserve the primitive spe-
 ' cies, which are of a more general utility. The ma-
 ' ternal condescendencies of nature may be discovered
 ' in the greatest part of her works; they are particu-
 ' larly manifest in the productions of our gardens
 ' Is it not strange, when such fine proportions and
 ' admirable fitness to our wants, with evident proofs
 ' of a divine beneficence, are presented to us by so
 ' many animals and plants, that we should collect un-
 ' formed fetuses only, to make a parade of them in
 ' our cabinets destined to the study of nature? Have
 ' not those who preserve them as things precious, and
 ' who draw from them consequences and doubts upon
 ' the wisdom of the author—have not they as bad a
 ' taste, and are not they as insincere, as those who,
 ' when in a foundery, should collect figures which
 ' were accidentally imperfect, by the swellings or moles
 ' of

‘ of metal, and should shew them as a proof of the ignorance of the artist ? The ancients burned monsters, the moderns preserve them ; they are like bad children, who keep an eye upon their mother in order to surprize her in a fault, that they may infer from thence a right to do amiss themselves. . . . I wish much to know how those who doubt of the existence of God in looking upon the works of nature, would desire to assure themselves of it ? would they wish to see him ? . . . Could we, in an human body, support his presence ? God has placed us at a proper distance from his infinite majesty : near enough to see him imperfectly ; far enough off not to be annihilated by the sight. If he communicates himself sometimes to us in a more intimate manner, it is not by the channel of our haughty sciences, but by that of our virtues. God discovers himself to the simple, and hides himself from the proud and vain.’

It is with regret that I am obliged to terminate here this extract. I could have wished to communicate to your highness the ideas of the author upon the universal deluge, as well as his criticism upon the received methods in the study of the sciences, with many other passages equally striking : but you will read this work some years hence ; and if it produces in you the profound impresson which it has made upon my heart and mind, you will never be weary with reading it. Finally then, this is an author of the present age, a man of learning, a geometrician, a metaphysician, and a great naturalist ; so much the more so as he has been in most parts of the world : in fine, he is a man of genius, who, with that astonishing union of acquired knowledge and superior abilities given by nature, has consecrated his talents and studies to the defence of religion*.

* This weak expression of my sentiments cannot be suspected. I do not know the author of the *Studies of Nature* ; I have never seen him, nor in my life have I ever had the least connection with him, even the most indirect.

C H A P. X.

OF THE NECESSITY OF WORSHIP, OF RELATION,
AND OF THE PROPHECIES.

MODERN pretended philosophers, in propagating principles which lead to atheism, professed publicly deism only : and as the God whom they admitted was, according to them, no more than a divinity insensible of our actions and of our homages, seeing that he did not mean to punish in another life our vices and crimes, they pretended that worship and prayer were useless. There appears nothing more new in this system than in all the other opinions they have wished to establish. If the history of heresies be read, all the principles and ideas which form the basis of modern philosophy will be found there*.

It is absurd to think the Supreme Being neither pretends to the love nor gratitude of the only creature which he has made reasonable, and which he has endowed with an immortal soul. By giving him the faculty of understanding, the obligation of loving was imposed upon him. It is natural to honour a sovereign master, to thank a benefactor, and to implore the aid of him who is omnipotent.—Particular prayer is only a mark of confidence and love ; public and solemn worship is that of respect : therefore the respect due to the Creator necessarily prescribes the use of worship and of prayer. Let us observe moreover, that without exterior worship the people would not believe even the existence of a God ; therefore respect, reason, and policy, equally demonstrate the necessity of worship. But if man be too weak and imperfect to be able to love, during life, his Creator only, how will he be able to conceive what homage he ought to render him ? To be

* Which is proved in this chapter.

honoured in a manner worthy of himself, it was necessary that God even should be pleased to enlighten man by revelation.

The authenticity of prophecies is such, that the most ardent detractors of religion have been forced to confess that these prophecies were striking and extraordinary. ' Indeed, from the beginning of the world, ' God predicted the coming of the Messiah; he himself announced him to Abraham; he announced him afterwards by his prophets, who have made known every considerable circumstance of his life: they have revealed his eternal lineage, and have made him known as God; they predicted that he was to be born of a virgin; they have indicated the place of his nativity, related the adoration of the wise men, his flight into Egypt, his return and abode in the city of Nazareth: they have described his manners, spoken of his instructions, of his miracles, of his death, of the insults which he suffered, of the different wounds he received, of his resurrection, of his ascension, of the reprobation of the Jews, of the vocation of the Pagans, of his church established upon the ruins of the synagogue, &c. Nothing has been omitted. The apostles have said nothing of his life which had not been foretold by the prophets. If this admirable agreement of one and the other, who wrote at times so different, be not divine, what else can it be? ' The destruction of the empire, of the temple, and of the sacrifices of the Jews, was predicted many ages before by their prophets, in all its circumstances, and confirmed by Jesus Christ, either by parables, or by simple words, so plain that they can suffer no other construction. It was in vain that the Jews attempted afterwards to re-unite themselves. Julian the apostate, in order to contradict holy writ, would have re-established Jerusalem, the temple, and the ancient sacrifices of it: nothing was spared to effect these purposes, and all was useless: winds, fires, tempests, all nature was armed against this enterprize, and ruining all his projects, left the Jews in the state they were

“ were in before, wherein they still are, and will for ever remain *.” Your Highness has seen, in history, Jew and Pagan authors themselves acknowledge the truth of the ancient prophecies which predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, and the eternal reprobation of its people. This reprobation, which has continued so many ages, is a miracle always existing. Indeed, can one conceive that there are still a great number of Jews, and that these Jews so numerous, united amongst themselves and rich, can neither assemble nor form a state? But it has been foretold that they should *subsist*, that they should be *dispersed*, and that they should neither have *cities* nor *kings*. They do *subsist*, and they are *dispersed* over the whole surface of the earth, and they have neither sovereignty nor chiefs.—Since the epocha of the destruction of Jerusalem, from Titus to the present time, revolutions, more or less rapid, have destroyed, annihilated, or formed all the empires of the earth; the Jews only have remained in the same situation: it has not been possible to exterminate them; they have not been able to re-establish themselves. Hated, proscribed, despised, they have existed without laws, without kings, without states, and without chiefs: with immense riches, with industry, with austere manners, a passionate attachment to religion, and consequently an ardent desire to form a national corps, and to re-establish themselves, in order to prove false the prophecies which dishonour them in the eyes of every people; with so many means and motives, they have seen every thing change upon the earth, and in the midst of so much confusion, and during so long a succession of ages, they have preserved their name, their customs, and ceremonies, without being ever able to change their immutable destiny. They are to-day exactly what they were at the death of the emperor Titus. This phænomenon is so contrary to the natural order of things, that history affords no other example of it. This single fact contains a great number of characters truly divine. One prediction accomplished

* Reflexions sur la Religion Chrétienne par le Père Pallu.

plished in all these details, however simple, however natural the event may be, is always the same thing, equally striking and miraculous. If this prediction were accompanied by a certain number of circumstances, it will be still more so, if it foretels a very distant event; and what will it be if it reveals moreover facts which appear impossible, and which human reason cannot conceive? . . . The reprobation of the Jews contains all these miraculous circumstances. The most incredulous, the most impious, are forced to acknowledge, that the prophecies relative to the Jews are authentic, of the highest antiquity; that they are particularized and accomplished in all their parts. How is it possible to deny these truths, consecrated and proved by the testimony even of pagan authors, and by the state in which these unfortunate people are seen? Impiety is reduced to say that this accord is extraordinary, inexplicable; and if religion explains it by reasonings impossible to be overturned, being determined not to believe, it refuses to hearken: such is its language, such its uprightness and sincerity! “ It was predicted
 ‘ that the Jews would reprobate Jesus Christ, and that
 ‘ they would be reprobated of God, because the chosen
 ‘ vineyard would bring forth only wild grapes (Isaiah
 ‘ v. 2, 3, &c.); that the chosen people would be in-
 ‘ fideis, ungrateful, and incredulous (Isaiah lxiv. 2.);
 ‘ that God would smite them with blindness (Deut.
 ‘ xxviii. 29.); that the Jews would exist (Jer. xxxi.
 ‘ 36.); that the house of Israel should be sifted among
 ‘ all nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve (Amos ix.
 ‘ 9.); that the children of Israel would abide many
 ‘ days without a king, and without a prince (Hos.
 ‘ iii. 4.), without prophets (Psalm lxxiv. 9.), expect-
 ‘ ing salvation, and not finding it (Jer. viii. 15 *).”

Your Highness has read, in holy writ, these predictions still more particularly treated of. The bounds of this work do not permit me to lay before you all the prophecies which we have remarked in the Scriptures. After this short enumeration of prophecies which concern

cern

cern the Jews, I shall pass over to those which foretold the Messiah, and I will quote the most striking ones only.

‘ God raised up prophets during sixteen hundred years, and yet, four hundred years afterwards, he dispersed all the prophecies, with all the Jews who carried them, into every part of the world The Gospel being to be every where believed, it was not only necessary that prophecies should have existed to make it believed, but still that these prophecies should be every where propagated to cause it to be universally embraced. If one man had written a book of predictions relative to Jesus Christ, as to the time and manner of his coming, and that Christ had come conformably to these predictions, this would have had infinite weight ; but there is much more in that which has just been spoken of. It is a succession of men, who, during four thousand years, constantly and without variation come, one after the other, to foretel the same event. It is a whole people which announces it, and which has existed four hundred years, still to bear witness of the assurances which they have of it, and from which they cannot be turned aside by any threats or persecutions whatsoever ; this is quite another consideration.—

‘ The time is predicted by the state of the Jewish people, by the state of the pagans, by the state of the temple, and by the number of years.

‘ It is foretold that the Messiah would come and form a new alliance, which would cause the going out of Egypt to be forgotten (Jer. xxiii. 7.) ; that he would establish his law, not exteriorly, but in the heart (Isaiah li. 7.) ; that he would “ put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” (Jer. xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 40.)

‘ The church would be small in the beginning, but that it would afterwards encrease (Ezek. xlvii. 1, and following verses).”

It is predicted, that ‘ idols should then be destroyed, and images made to cease out of Noph ; that there
‘ should

‘ should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt,
 ‘ and that God would put a fear in the land of Egypt
 ‘ (Ezek. xxx. 13).”

‘ That the temples of the idols should be thrown
 ‘ down; and that among all nations, and in every
 ‘ place, pure sacrifices, and not animals, should be of-
 ‘ fered to the Lord (Mal. i. 11.)

‘ That God would teach men of his ways (Isaiah
 ‘ ii. 3. Mich. iv. 2, &c.)

‘ That he would be king of the Jews and the Gen-
 ‘ tiles (Psal. ii. 6 and 8. lxxi. 8, &c.)

‘ And no man ever came before or after who taught
 ‘ any thing that approached these things.

‘ The Jews, by putting Jesus Christ to death, that
 ‘ they might not receive him for Messiah, gave him
 ‘ the last mark of a Messiah. By continuing to reject
 ‘ him they have made themselves irreproachable wit-
 ‘ nesses; and by crucifying and renouncing him they
 ‘ have accomplished the prophecies.

‘ Who would not discover Jesus Christ by so many
 ‘ particular circumstances, which have been predicted
 ‘ of him! for it is said,

‘ That he would have a messenger sent before him,
 ‘ (Mal. iii. 1.)

‘ That a child should be born whose name should
 ‘ be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God,
 ‘ The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah
 ‘ ix. 6.)

‘ That he should be born in the city of Bethlehem
 ‘ (Mich. v. 2.)

‘ That he should come from the family of Judah
 ‘ (Gen. xlix. 8, and the following verses), and of the
 ‘ posterity of David (2 Kings vii. 12. and Isaiah
 ‘ vii. 13); that he should appear in Jerusalem princi-
 ‘ pally (Mal. iii. 1. Hag. ii. 10.)

‘ That his glory should overcome the wise and the
 ‘ learned (Isaiah vi. 10); that he should announce the
 ‘ Gospel to the poor and meek (Isaiah lxi. 1), open
 ‘ the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and
 ‘ make

‘ make the lame man leap as a hart (Isaiah xxxv. 5
 ‘ and 6); that he would bring the blind by a way that
 ‘ they knew not, and lead them by paths that they had
 ‘ not known; that he would make darkness light be-
 ‘ fore them (Isaiah xlii. 16.)

‘ That he would shew the right way (Isaiah xxx.
 ‘ 21), and be a preceptor to the Gentiles (Isaiah
 ‘ Iv. 4).

‘ That he would be a victim for the sins of the
 ‘ world; that he would be wounded for our trans-
 ‘ gressions, and bruised for our iniquities, (Isaiah
 ‘ liii. 5.

‘ That he would be the foundation and precious
 ‘ stone of the corner (Isaiah xxviii. 16.)

‘ That he would be for a stone of stumbling, and
 ‘ for a rock of offence (Isaiah viii. 14.)

‘ That many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem should
 ‘ stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken (Isaiah
 ‘ viii. 15.)

‘ That the builders should refuse this stone (Ps.
 ‘ cxvii. 22.)

‘ That he would make this stone which the build-
 ‘ ers refused to become the head stone of the cor-
 ‘ ner.

‘ And that this stone would become a great moun-
 ‘ tain, and fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35.)

‘ That therefore it would be rejected (Ps. cxvii. 22),
 ‘ despised and rejected of men (Is. liii. 2 and 3), be-
 ‘ trayed (Ps. xl. 10), sold (Zech. xi. 12), smitten (Is.
 ‘ l. 6), mocked (Is. xxxiv. 16), afflicted in an infinity
 ‘ of manners (Ps. lxxviii. 27), should quench his
 ‘ thirst with gall (Ps. lxviii. 22); that his hands and
 ‘ feet would be pierced (Ps. xxi. 17); that his face
 ‘ would be spit upon (Isaiah l. 6); that he would be
 ‘ put to death (Dan. ix. 26); that they would cast lots
 ‘ for his garments (Ps. xxi. 19).

‘ That he would rise up from the dead (Psal. xv.
 ‘ 16).

‘ On the third day (Hof. vi. 2).

‘ That

- That he would ascend into heaven (Psal. xlv. 6.
- and lxvii. 19).
- To sit at the right-hand of God (Pf. cix. 1).
- That kings would arm themselves against him (Pf.
- ii. 2).
- That being at the right-hand of the Father, he
- would overcome all his enemies (Pf. cix. 5).
- That the kings of the earth and all the people
- would worship him (Pf. lxxi. 11)."

C H A P. XI.

OF THE APOSTLES AND THE EVANGELISTS.

‘ **N**OT to believe the apostles, it must be said
 ‘ that they were deceived, or that they are themselves
 ‘ deceivers ; both one and the other is impossible. As
 ‘ to the first, a man cannot so far impose upon himself
 ‘ as to suppose another to be risen from the dead ; and
 ‘ with respect to the second, the hypothesis that they
 ‘ were impostors, is strangely absurd. Let it be re-
 ‘ gularly examined. Let it be supposed that these
 ‘ twelve men assembled after the death of Christ, con-
 ‘ spired together, and agreed to say that he was risen
 ‘ from the dead. By this they attacked every power.
 ‘ —The human heart is strangely inclined to levity,
 ‘ to change, to be worked upon by promises and plea-
 ‘ sures. If one of them had contradicted himself in
 ‘ the least circumstance, wrought upon by these attrac-
 ‘ tions, and, what is still more, by imprisonment, tor-
 ‘ tures, and death, they would all have been lost.—
 ‘ Let this be attended to.

‘ Whilst Christ was with them, he was able to sup-
 ‘ port them ; but if he did not appear to them after
 ‘ his death, what caused them to act as they did ?

‘ The style of the Evangelists is to be admired in
 ‘ many respects, and particularly because there are no
 ‘ invectives from the historians, neither against Judas
 ‘ nor Pilate, no more than against any of the enemies
 ‘ or crucifiers of Jesus Christ.

‘ If this modesty of the Evangelical historians had
 ‘ been affected, as well as other parts of so fine a cha-
 ‘ racter, and that they had affected it but for the pur-
 ‘ pose of making it to be remarked ; if they themselves
 ‘ had not dared to observe it, they would not have
 ‘ failed to have found friends who would have done so
 ‘ much

‘ much in their favour. But as they acted so without affectation, and from disinterested motives, they did not cause it to be taken notice of by any body ; I do not know if this observation has yet been made, which proves the simplicity with which it was done.

‘ Jesus Christ performed miracles, the apostles did so afterwards, and the primitive saints also performed many others ; because the prophecies not being yet accomplished, and being fulfilled by them, nothing bore witness but miracles. It had been predicted that the Messiah would convert nations. How could these prophecies be accomplished without the conversion of nations ? And how could nations, not seeing this last work of the prophecies which proved the Messiah, have been converted to him ? Therefore all was not accomplished before he was dead, risen again, and that nations were converted. And miracles were necessary during the time of their conversion. They are now unnecessary to prove the truth of the Christian religion ; for the prophecies accomplished are an existing miracle.’

If a single man had been the disciple of Jesus Christ, and that he had attested his miracles ; if this man had been simple and vulgar, and that he had all at once written and related with the sublimity which is admired in the Evangelists, it could not have been doubted but that he was divinely inspired ; it would be impossible to imagine, that, having passed so much time with Jesus Christ, having seen all that he related, that he had been deceived. And instead of one man, there were a great number of disciples, and twelve apostles ; and the recital of these facts has been transmitted by four men, whose narratives perfectly agree. As the illustrious author which I have just quoted remarks, it cannot be said that these four men could possibly be deceived ; they were eye-witnesses, how could they be mistaken in things so positive, in facts so clear, in the dead being raised to life, upon the resurrection of Christ himself, &c. ? They could not therefore be deceived : and it is as little credible that they were willing to deceive.

ceive.—They were men deprived of science, of credit, and of riches; men vulgar and without education; finally, wretched fishermen! At what time did they undertake to seduce the whole world? After the death of their master, that is, when they had nothing more to expect or fear from him; at a time when shame, fear, their temporal welfare, all obliged them to hide themselves and to hold their tongues. If they had wished to deceive, they must have lost every thing at once, their senses, reason, and conscience. But, on one part, what purity, what innocence of manners; on the other, what high wisdom shines in all their discourses! what supernatural virtue in their actions! what importance in their principles! what perseverance and heroic courage in their conduct!—If they had been willing to deceive, why did they run the risk of losing their reputation in the eyes of the multitude by an avowal of their faults*, of their profound ignorance, of the baseness of their origin? Why did not they conceal the poverty of their master? and why did they represent him in a stable, in a shop, and not make of him an hero, according to custom? Why that austere moral? Why did not they invent commodious maxims, easy to be followed, principles favourable both to their passions and to our own? Could they flatter themselves to be able to seduce, subdue, to draw men after them by combating all their inclinations, and requiring that they should sacrifice their most lively and agreeable natural propensities; by preaching to them humility, temperance, forgetfulness of injuries, abstinence from all their pleasures, and by commanding them to render *good for evil*? &c. Why should they have attached an eternal infamy to their whole nation, by publishing every where, that the Jews were guilty of the most dreadful of crimes, and cursed for ever by God? This

* As when they spoke of their doubts, of their little faith, with which they were reproached by our Saviour, who complained of the difficulty they had to understand his parables. They recite, with the same candor, St. Peter's denial of Christ, the incredulity of St. Thomas, &c.

declaration exposed them otherways to the implacable resentment of their entire country which they dishonoured. Yet they all spoke the same language; each, at different times, wrote, in different places, the same things, and preached the same truths; and with what ingenuoufness and sublime simplicity!

Finally, if they had been willing to deceive, they would have been ambitious profligates; and their conduct was a model of perfection, which appeared supernatural. They devoted themselves to poverty, and preached, for the most part, the contempt of honours and riches: not one among them would rule over the others; their constant emulation was that of humility. Impostors would have had an aim, an interested design; they had only that of fulfilling their mission and of obtaining heaven. They themselves declare, that their master announced to them that they would be persecuted in preaching his law, that they had nothing to expect from men but injuries and death. They frequently repeat this:—Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. . . . If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you . . . But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake.’ St. John, chap. xv. . . . ‘They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea the time cometh that whoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.’ St. John xvi.

Could the apostles have invented a prediction, which, if it had not been accomplished, would have destroyed all their doctrine, and which could not be accomplished but by their being constantly persecuted, injured, and at length led to torments and an ignominious death? They persevered in their belief, although it actually drew upon them the most horrid persecutions; and to support and propagate it they suffered joyfully tortures and death; and, at the same time, implored heaven for those who deprived them of life. It is therefore impossible to believe that they could be deceived, or that they wished to deceive; and, this one point granted,

ed, it is also impossible to doubt of the truths which religion teaches us. This incontestable and decisive proof is not extraordinary only, but it is accompanied by many other proofs equally respectable. Think of that long succession of oracles which predicted our Saviour, of that multitude of witnesses, of all ages, sexes, and descriptions, who have sealed, with their blood, this belief: reflect upon the sublimity of Evangelical morals and dogmas, upon the number of great men of superior genius who have been convinced and converted, solely by reading with attention the holy scriptures: consider how incomprehensible it is that the austerity of the morals of the Evangelists has not hindered the establishment of Christianity: finally, study nature and the human heart, and every doubt will vanish; reason, sentiment, and true philosophy will then unite themselves in order to enlighten us, and will become the immoveable basis of faith.

C H A P. XII.

OF THE STYLE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED AS A PROOF OF RELIGION. OF THE MORALITY, AND OF THE LAWS OF MOSES.

THE doctors (says Abadie) philosophers, and men in general, shew infallibly, in the end, their weaknesses and their passions, either by the thing of which they speak, or by their manner of expression.

‘ The works of Seneca are filled with a great number of fine precepts, and maxims of virtue ; but it is easy to perceive that his intention has been, for the most part, that of doing himself credit as a writer ; and although there were nothing more in his writings than his attention to give a fine and agreeable turn to his thoughts, and that continual affectation of wit, these alone would be sufficient to make him famous. Plato, having more just and reasonable ideas of the Divinity than the vulgar, had the weakness not to dare to consider his sentiments, and opened himself to his friends only, to whom he gave to understand, that when his letters should treat of more Gods than one it would be mockery ; but that when he spoke of God alone, he spoke seriously. Socrates, near dying, did not know whether he was going to be happy or miserable, so much was he shaken in his opinion. And we can scarcely read a page of the most wise and refined author that ever existed, without perceiving some marks of weakness or of affectation.

‘ But there is another defect, which is common to those who have written upon morality with the greatest sublimity, which is, that they tend only to elevate wisdom, or at most, virtue.”

All the Pagan divinities were vicious and dissolute, the most sensible of the Pagans clearly perceived that
very

very powerful incitements to virtue could not be drawn from the consideration attached to these deities, more wicked than men.

They were therefore obliged to have recourse to the attractions and beauty of virtue ; and as they could not make it to be admired for the love of those vicious divinities which they had heard of, they endeavoured to make it loved and respected for itself.

‘ But in this they were greatly deceived, since virtue will never be otherwise than very languid, if the essential relation which it has with the Divinity be taken away ; and men who boast of loving virtue for itself alone, do nothing else than become guilty, in a lesser degree, of idolatry.

‘ It is extravagant to despise riches, for the sake of despising them, to deprive ourselves of pleasure for the sake of being deprived of it, or to expose ourselves to danger merely for the sake of being exposed to it. Virtue consists in making these efforts upon ourselves when we ought and are obliged to do so ; so that God being the great principle of all our duties and obligations, true virtue cannot be well conceived without a relation with God.

‘ It is not very difficult to perceive, that the books which contain the revelation of the Jews, are very far from having any one of these characters. It will not be said that they cherish the voluptuousness and passions of men, nor that they flatter their pride, or satisfy the vain curiosity of the learned.

‘ But we should express ourselves weakly, if we only said that the books which contain the revelation of the Jews, have not this character ; we cannot but acknowledge that they have an opposite one. Instead of encouraging voluptuousness, they destroy it, root it out, as well as injustice, self-interest, and the other passions :—instead of flattering our pride, they destroy it, by the clear idea that is there given to us of our misery and corruption, opposed to the majesty and goodness of God, which are, without doubt, the most capable of all objects of humiliating proud

' minds :—instead of feeding the vain curiosity of such
 ' of the learned as know merely for the sake of know-
 ' ing, we learn in them that that science is but vani-
 ' ty :—instead of political refinements, we find in
 ' them an amiable simplicity of manners, which is
 ' there proposed as an example, and recommended
 ' every where, as contrary to the knowledge of the
 ' men of the present age as light is to darkness :—
 ' finally, instead of making us love virtue for itself
 ' only, or from motives of reputation which the prac-
 ' tice of it gives, here are doctors, who, aspiring
 ' higher, make us love virtue for the love of God ; a
 ' remarkable character, which distinguishes them from
 ' all other doctors.

' Indeed one cannot consider without some kind of
 ' indignation, that people who have so fine and delicate
 ' a taste for knowing the genius of every thing, and
 ' for judging of the character of every author, when
 ' human literature is in question, fall into a voluntary
 ' stupidity and ignorance, when it is required to per-
 ' ceive those characters which sensibly distinguish the
 ' writings of the Jews from all human books, especially
 ' that incomparable piety, so constant and uniform,
 ' which speaks always of God, and of God only ;
 ' which looks upon all those who go from God as lost,
 ' and which derives all the motives of its exhortations
 ' from God ; which teaches us that every thing comes
 ' from him, and that we ought to devote all to him,
 ' our bodies, our souls, our words, our actions, our
 ' property, our time, and our lives : this revelation
 ' being but a collection of examples, of precepts, and
 ' of exhortations, which all tend to oblige us to
 ' glorify our God, by leading holy lives for the love
 ' of him.

' No affectation or weakness is seen in the manner in
 ' which these books are written, any more than in the
 ' things which they contain.—You do not remark that
 ' these authors take a pride in making a display of wit
 ' and erudition ; a quality which seems to be the prin-
 ' cipal essence of all others : they do not trouble them-
 ' selves

‘ selves about pleasing their readers, and they appear
‘ far from writing for fame.

‘ This is the constant and perpetual character, not
‘ only of a single book of the Jewish writings, but of
‘ all the books which compose the Old Testament ;
‘ and at the time that a human author has a difficulty
‘ to conceal his passions, or not to discover himself, in
‘ the smallest book which he composes, here is seen a
‘ long succession of authors, who, having lived in dif-
‘ ferent ages, write, not only a single book, but many
‘ books, wherein not only no trace of human passions
‘ or weaknesses is to be found, but there is seen to
‘ reign a spirit of mildness, of piety, of disinterestedness,
‘ of an amiable and virtuous simplicity, which clearly
‘ shews that the hearts of the writers were warmed
‘ with a fire different from that of the human passions,
‘ and enlightened by a flame different from that which
‘ has a connection with them. They spoke with au-
‘ thority, without any kind of fear, and as those who
‘ were fully encouraged. They appeared to be ani-
‘ mated with the design alone of glorifying God. Has
‘ a finer character ever been seen ?

‘ Their manner of speaking and writing is not only
‘ unlike that of the men of the age, affected, far-
‘ fetched, full of subtilty and refinement, or accompa-
‘ nied by timidity and doubt, turning entirely upon the
‘ manner, expression, arrangement of thoughts, the
‘ apt and ingenious disposition of things ; but they
‘ explain themselves with a simplicity which is pro-
‘ portioned to the capacity of all mankind.

‘ As it is from God that they speak, they must
‘ necessarily say sublime and magnificent things ; but
‘ as it is to men, and to all kinds of men, that they
‘ speak, it was necessary that their language should be
‘ simple and natural. The ideas that they give us of
‘ God are so great, that every thing is low and base,
‘ when compared to these divine descriptions ; and if
‘ this were doubted of, it would only be necessary to
‘ compare the book of Job, the revelations of Isaiah,
‘ or the Psalms of David, with all that the most ele-

‘ vated minds among the Pagans have thought of the
 ‘ Divinity : but it must at the same time be avowed,
 ‘ that no authors ever expressed themselves in so simple
 ‘ and popular a manner. Certainly, if these teachers
 ‘ were like others, they would express themselves more
 ‘ nobly, having sense enough to express themselves in
 ‘ a more elevated manner.”

A fact which proves at once the utility and truth of religion is, that in every nation where that holy religion is not established, morality is, in its essence, vicious. Greece and Italy have produced numbers of great men of all kinds ; but their most famous philosophers have left nothing upon morality but works full of errors, and principles evidently inconsistent or pernicious. Even Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are not sheltered from this reproach. The first joined, to inconsistent principles, an egotism carried often to the most shocking degree. Could the second, endowed with a sublime sensibility, do otherwise than excite the most flattering admiration, by developing the most secret recesses of that pure and generous soul which he had received from nature ? When he describes himself, he instructs, affects, and gains the heart ; but his principles are much inferior to his sentiments. Some of his maxims tend to favour suicide ; besides they are sometimes in opposition to each other ; and, in spite of the extent of his genius and the uprightness of his heart, he has frequently false ideas. It must be observed, that these two great philosophers, the most perfect of all antiquity, have only written since the preaching of the Gospel, and that they must necessarily have profited by the divine lights propagated by Christianity. ‘ The
 ‘ Jews only and the Christians have enjoyed pure light ;
 ‘ mythology had not yet all its form nor philosophy
 ‘ its sects. Moses had already revealed to the Jews,
 ‘ truths as enlightening and interesting after their origin * Truth seemed concentrated, in a corner of

* Moses lived three hundred years before the taking of Troy.

‘ the

‘ the earth, with the people of Israel Christ
 ‘ appeared ; as the light coming from darkness diffi-
 ‘ pates the obscurity of the night, so did the Gospel
 ‘ dissipate the falshoods of men, and present them with
 ‘ a torch of immortal light. In order to perceive that
 ‘ which is the most astonishing in this prerogative,
 ‘ let us trace it to its origin. Let us compare the
 ‘ truth of the Gospel, its simplicity, its purity, and
 ‘ its lustre, with all the human productions of those
 ‘ times. What a triumph for religion ! How ridicu-
 ‘ lous it renders the excessive esteem which our philoso-
 ‘ phers have for their reason, and their contempt of
 ‘ revelation ! If they be more enlightened than Epi-
 ‘ curus or Aristotle with respect to morality, it is not
 ‘ that they have more genius and penetration, but be-
 ‘ cause they live in different ages. Religion even,
 ‘ which they treat contumeliously, has given them in-
 ‘ structions *.”

Reason only would not have been able to destroy idolatry ; and, according to the judicious remark of Bayle, *man stood in need of a revealed light, which could supply the deficiency of philosophical light.* The Pagan philosophers clearly perceived the absurdity of their religion : but deprived of the knowledge of truth, their vain speculations, their extravagant systems, were no better than the errors they combated †, and almost all of them propagated opinions more pernicious to the happiness of man than all the absurdities of mythology. Some denied the liberty of man, or professed atheism ; others approved and advised suicide ‡ ; whilst

* Lettres Critiques de Monsieur l'Abbé Gauchat, tom i.

† It was a philosopher of great fame, and full of genius, who invented the system of the metempsychosis ; and certainly the foundation of mythology is infinitely less absurd than that strange doctrine.

‡ The sect of the Hegeriacs had for chief Hegeriac of Cyrena, who lived about four hundred and sixteen years before Christ. He was surnamed the Orator of Death, because he exhorted his disciples to kill themselves the moment they should be the least disgusted with life.

several, more ridiculously absurd, kept schools, and persuaded their disciples to study, for the sole purpose of teaching them to doubt of every thing, and neither to believe their reason nor their hearts, neither that which they saw, nor that which they heard. The precepts of Epicurus favoured the most dangerous inclinations: the Cynic philosophers presented the most monstrous assemblage of an horrid depravity united to the most impudent effrontery: the Stoics, the most virtuous philosophers of all antiquity, disgraced their doctrine by maintaining extravagant opinions, and they were so inconceivably inconsistent as to approve of the infamous irregularities of the Cynics *.

Attached to their own opinions, such are the men who have the greatest genius. Some reflections of the author of the *Lettres Critiques* upon modern paganism will throw more light upon this truth.

‘ Let us not quote,” says he, ‘ Africa and America, the people there are stupefied and degraded; but China and Japan are polished countries; arts, laws, and letters are there held in estimation. Will it be denied that in these vast countries there are no philosophers endowed with penetration, judgment, and uprightness? Why therefore do not they perceive the inconceivable absurdity of the idolatry which they profess? why cannot they elevate themselves to the idea which seems so natural, that of a Supreme Being who has created all things? why do not they know, at least, the truths which, according to our modern Deists, must strike the eyes of every man of a sensible mind? Illustrious pre-eminence of the Christian religion! As soon as it penetrated these climates, armed with the light of a missionary full of simplicity and of candour, it triumphed over the wisdom of philosophers; as soon as it had retired they re-entered darkness: and it is thus that, in every age, revelation has caused the true God to be known! In vain would ungrateful philosophers deny this gift,

* See *Bayle*, tom. iii.

‘ and attribute to their genius only that which is a gift
 ‘ of faith ! They are themselves ignorant of the true
 ‘ source of their wisdom : it comes from a Christian
 ‘ education *.’

Indeed men given up to their own understandings, when they are not depraved, cannot believe that the universe is the work of hazard ; they see in nature evident proofs that a Supreme intelligence has created all : they perceive also that the soul must outlive the perishable body which it animates, and that it will find in another life eternal punishments or rewards. This is what reason itself teaches to all men ; it preserves them from atheism, and gives them just notions of the dignity of their being. But it cannot elevate their minds to the knowledge of the Author of nature. This was too sublime to be conceived by man without the aid of revelation. All people who have been deprived of this light have been idolaters, have admitted a plurality of deities ; and, as the writer which I have just quoted remarks, the history of the ancients, and of modern paganism, incontestably proves this truth. All false religions have taught and still teach idolatry ; the Mahometan religion cannot be quoted as a proof of the contrary. Mahomet was born towards the end of the sixth century ; his mother was a Jewess, and every body knows that this impostor drew from holy writ the idea of an only God ; and that many passages of the Alcoran are taken from the same sacred source.

It is in vain repeated, that polytheism is but a corruption of atheism. I do not comprehend it so, and both ancient and modern history prove this opinion to be false. In the fine ages of Greece and Rome, the people of these countries, so justly renowned for their genius for the arts ; these people, whom their artists, philosophers, orators, and poets have rendered so famous ; these people, the remembrance of whom will never be lost, were nevertheless plunged into the most profound idolatry. Whilst, in a corner of the globe, another people,

* *Lettres Critiques*, tom. i.

obscure and not numerous, a people simple and frugal; who have left upon the earth no monument of architecture, a people among whom there were never any philosophers, previously preserved, from the beginning of the world, this sublime truth, *That there exists but one God, Creator of man, and of the universe.* But still, say they, this idea is so simple, so natural! the plurality of Gods is an imagination so extravagant!—I agree to it, and this is the wonderful, which is not enough admired. The Jews and the Christians have alone known this striking truth, and it is they only who have propagated it throughout the universe.

The chief of the modern pretended philosophers, in order to attack the laws delivered by Moses, has permitted himself, according to his custom, to write a great number of falsehoods, and to make many false quotations. The learned author of the excellent work entitled, *Lettres de quelques Juifs à M. de Voltaire*, has refuted these errors with the most satisfactory clearness and precision. And he has proved, that these laws, attacked by ignorance united to insincerity, were dictated by an admirable wisdom. The ritual laws, which forbid the eating of certain unwholesome animals *, were, without doubt, very wise ones. ‘Where is the ridicule, says the author of the letters, that unwholesome aliments should have been forbidden; and that the use of others, which were agreeable to some people, should be prohibited, for particular reasons, which cannot be condemned when they are not known? Among these ritual laws, some of them had for object to inspire the Hebrews with an invincible horror for the abominable superstitions of their neighbours. From thence those prohibitions to force their children through fire †, to mark them-

* Such as flies without scales, pigs, hedge-hogs, owls, locusts, rats, lizards, serpents, &c. Locusts may be eaten in the East, they are still eaten in Arabia, as well as lizards and certain kinds of rats,

† As those who worshipped Moloch did.

‘ selves

selves with hot iron†, &c. Other laws were de-
 stined to recall to their minds the miracles performed
 for them by the Eternal. Others again, like so many
 emblems of useful parables, concealed an admirable
 fund of instruction Others were the effect of a
 wise policy, &c. There are even some of these laws
 which appear to have been especially destined to serve
 as substantial and palpable proofs of the continual pro-
 vidence of God over his people, and of the divine
 mission of his first conductor. Such was, among
 others, the law of repose, in all his possessions, dur-
 ing the Sabbatic year: a very singular and extraor-
 dinary law, and which could not naturally occur to
 any legislator. It was founded upon an express pro-
 mise: *Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my*
judgments and do them;—and if ye shall say, What shall
we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor
gather in our increase. Then I will command my blef-
sing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth
fruit for three years. Levit. xxv. 18, 21.—This
 law could not be founded but upon the certainty of
 the legislator that every sixth year would yield an
 abundance for three years. Without this, Moses
 would have run a risk of losing his fellow-citizens by
 famine, and of drawing upon his memory a public
 curse. Now from whence could he derive this? Cer-
 tainly but from God. Can it be conceived that he
 would have dared to have given such a law, if he had
 only been an ordinary legislator? But that which
 would have been the highest folly in a politician who
 should have had human resources only, is a demon-
 stration that he had others, and that God, whose
 minister he called himself, assisted him effectually, and
 watched incessantly over Israel Every part
 of the Mosaic legislation announces the high and
 divine wisdom of the legislator*. His dogmas are

† Some idolaters marked upon their skins several figures in honour of their Gods.

* The author of this work proves this truth by entering into the greatest detail upon every part of the Mosaic legislation.

reasonable and sublime, his precepts religious, and his morals pure and holy. His laws, political, military, and civil, are equitable and mild, and his ritual laws are founded on reason. In a word, all are admirably calculated for the designs and views of the legislator, for the circumstances of the times, places, and climates, for the inclinations of the Hebrews, and the manners of the neighbouring people, &c.— In this legislation there is nothing which contradicts the laws of nature, or those of virtue; they all breathe piety, justice, uprightness, and beneficence. The object, antiquity, origin, duration, talents, genius, and the virtues of the legislator, the respect of so many people, all concur to prove his excellence.

Your greatest men † have admired and looked upon him as the first source of human and divine law*; and you, sir, you see nothing in him but *absurdity*, and *barbarity*. For our parts, when we consider the just reproaches made against ancient and modern legislators; when we reflect upon the pernicious systems advanced in past ages, as in this, by philosophers; when we see the providence of God, his justice, his existence even contested; fatality introduced, liberty destroyed, the bounds of the just and the unjust audaciously broken down, or uncertainly placed, by pretended sages; man degraded, all ties of society broken; vain chimeras and cruel doubts substituted for the most consolatory and useful truth, &c.; affected by so many errors, we cannot but esteem ourselves happy in having been preserved from them by a legislation so reasonable and holy.”—

† It is a Jew who speaks to M. de Voltaire.

* “ We may quote, among others, le Chancelier, who in our own time has done immortal honour to France by his knowledge and virtues. This great man had so much respect for the Mosaic legislation, he esteemed the Jewish code so wisely formed, that he got extracted and reduced to order a *corps of Jewish laws*. But Daguesseau, l’Hopital, Bacon, &c. are trifling civilians, weak geniuses, in comparison of our philosophers.”—Note of the author.

M. de

M. de Voltaire has declaimed against the military laws, above all, of the Jews; he has repeatedly said that they were *inhuman* and *barbarous*. Let us hear again upon the subject the author I have just quoted: I will confine myself to some striking passages.

‘ The legislation of the Jews forbid the enrollment of youth *under the age of twenty years*.

‘ It commands, that when the troops are assembled, the chiefs and officers say to them, *What man is there that hath built a new house and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house. And what man is he who hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him go also and return unto his house. And what man is there hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house**. . . . That if the army were obliged to pass over the lands of the citizens or allies, no devastation should be made. . . . *Thou shalt pay for all, even for the water which thou drinkest*. The law did not permit war to be undertaken by caprice or ambition. . . . Arms could not be taken up, except for self-defence against unjust invasions, or to obtain satisfaction for wrongs which had been done: and it was only upon a refusal of redress that it was permitted to enter into the enemy’s country: the law, then, did not permit wanton devastations to be made. . . . It forbade the cutting down of fruit-trees. . . . When, after defeating the enemy, siege was laid to one of their cities, the law obliged *peace to be proclaimed unto it*†. . . . *. . . . When thou goest forth among thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; then shalt thou bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine*

* Deuteronomy, xx. 5, 6, and 7.

† Deuteronomy, xx. 10.

“house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.”*

These are the military laws which M. de Voltaire calls laws of cruelty, of a *detestable barbarity*. It is true that he has not quoted them, and he has imputed to them cruelties which were committed among the pagans only, *cruelties* which were exercised by his hero, and emperor, and philosopher, Julian the apostate, whose troops, as the *author of the Letters* remarks, made, at the sieges of Magosa, Nalcha, and Dacires, a general massacre, without distinction of either age or sex. M. de Voltaire has written, *that the custom of the Jews was to kill all the males in the cities taken by assault; and that they were always commanded to kill every one, except girls which were marriageable; whilst the law permitted those only who carried arms to be killed, and prescribed the sparing of women and children.* M. de Voltaire, his partisans, and those who have copied him, have repeated a thousand times, that the killing of women and children, all except *marriageable girls*, was commanded by the law. Is it not clear, asks the author of the Letters, that it is to calumniate grossly our laws, or to shew evidently to the whole world that you have never read them? One of the laws of the Jews commanded them to conduct travellers uncertain of their way, to shew them faithfully their right road†. The legislator commanded them to lend generously to those who should be in need. *If there be among you a poor man, of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth‡. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury: but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the Lord thy God may bless*

* Deuteronomy, xxi. 10, 11, 12, and 13.

† There is also a commandment in favour of the blind.

‡ Deut. xv. 7, 8.

thee, in all that thou setteſt thine hand to, in the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it *.——It permits pledges to be taken, but without violence. When thou doſt lend thy brother any thing, thou ſhalt not go into his houſe to fetch his pledge. Thou ſhalt ſtand abroad, and the man to whom thou doſt lend ſhall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. No man ſhall take the nether or the upper mill-ſtone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou ſhalt deliver it unto him by that the ſun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his ſkin: wherein ſhall he ſleep? and it ſhall come to paſs, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious. In any caſe thou ſhalt deliver him the pledge again when the ſun goeth down, that he may ſleep in his own raiment and bleſs thee; and it ſhall be righteousneſs unto thee before the Lord thy God†. The legiſlator is pleaſed that the poor ſhould be invited to feaſts, religious festivals, &c. And thou ſhalt eat there before the Lord, and thou ſhalt rejoice, thou and thine houſehold, and the Levite, and the ſtranger, and the fatherleſs, and the widow, which are within thy gates, ſhall come, and be ſatiſfied, &c. ‡. Thus ſeveral times each year the rich and the poor were to ſit at the ſame table, united by the ties of benefactions and of gratitude. But the ſtranger, ſaith the Lord, that dwelleth with you, ſhall be unto you as one born among you, and thou ſhalt love him as thyſelf; for ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God*. The legiſlator commanded even that animals ſhould be treated with mildneſs. . . . He forbade the dam with her young ones to be preſented at the altar, and to kill the young one before the eyes of its mother. Thou ſhalt not take away from the dam the little one which ſhe ſuckles. 'Thou ſhalt not kill the animal purſued, which takes refuge like a ſuppliant in thy houſe, &c. . . . Never were the

* Deut. xxiii. 20.

† Deut. xxiv. 6. 10, 11, 13. Exod. xxii. 26, 27,

‡ Deut. xiv. 26. 29.

* Levit. xix. 34.

' barbarous.

‘ barbarous tortures of the rack known in the Mosaic
 ‘ legislation Parents were obliged to teach their
 ‘ children the principal statutes and the ordinances of
 ‘ the legislation, it was an obligation which the legis-
 ‘ lator imposed upon them in the strongest terms
 ‘ *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will*
 ‘ *not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mo-*
 ‘ *ther, and that, when they have chastened him, will not*
 ‘ *hearken unto them : then shall his father and his mother*
 ‘ *lay hold on him and bring him out unto the elders of his*
 ‘ *city, and unto the gate of his place ; and they shall say*
 ‘ *unto the elders of this city, This our son is stubborn and*
 ‘ *rebellious, he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and*
 ‘ *a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him*
 ‘ *with stones, that he die, &c.**

‘ Thus the legislator repressed vice, and maintained
 ‘ paternal authority, without abandoning the life of
 ‘ children to the anger of the fathers †. . . . The law
 ‘ directed him who had enticed a maid that was not
 ‘ betrothed to marry her, to make her a jointure, and
 ‘ if the father of the girl refused to give her to the
 ‘ seducer, the latter was obliged to pay to the father a
 ‘ considerable sum, according to the dower of virgins.
 ‘ The laws upon modesty were extremely severe.
 ‘ *A woman, say they, shall not wear that which per-*
 ‘ *taineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s*
 ‘ *garment, &c.’*

Your Highness easily recollects these beneficent laws,
 which you have admired in reading holy writ ; and I
 will terminate this detail by quoting still some other
 passages which particularly struck you : it is yourself,
 and the Prince your brother ‡, who remarked them
 during your lectures, and they are your own extracts
 which I copy.

‘ Honour thy father and thy mother, as thy Lord
 ‘ thy God hath commanded thee, that thy days may

* Deut. chap. xxi. ver. 18, 19, 20, and 21.

† As did the Roman laws.

‡ His Serene Highness the Duke of Montpensier.

‘ be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in
 ‘ the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee * . . .
 ‘ Let each one stand in awe of his father and mother.’
 Exod. Deut. Levit.

‘ Cursed be he that setteth light by his father and
 ‘ mother. And all the people shall say Amen.’ Deut.
 xxvii. 16.

‘ Whosoever shall curse his father or mother shall
 ‘ be punished with death.’ Exod.

‘ Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.
 ‘ If you afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all
 ‘ unto me, I will surely hear their cry.’ Exod. xxii.
 12, 13.

‘ Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go
 ‘ astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in
 ‘ any case bring them again unto thy brother. And
 ‘ if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know
 ‘ him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own
 ‘ house, and it shall be with thee till thy brother seek
 ‘ after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In
 ‘ like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt
 ‘ thou do with his raiment; and with all lost things
 ‘ of thy brother’s, which he hath lost, and thou hast
 ‘ found, shalt thou do likewise; thou mayest not hide
 ‘ thyself. Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his
 ‘ ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from
 ‘ them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up
 ‘ again.’ Deut. chap. xxii. 1, 2, 3 4.

‘ Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant
 ‘ which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall
 ‘ dwell with thee, even among you, in that place
 ‘ which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it
 ‘ liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.’ Deut.
 chap. xxiii. 15, 16.

* This was one of the commandments which God him-
 self d stated to his people, and that he wrote upon stone.
 It is the only commandment to which a particular pro-
 mise is attached for recompence, and the promise the most
 interesting to men.

‘ When

‘ When thou cuttest down thine harvest in the field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the works of thine hands.’ Deut. xxiv. 19.

God makes the same commandment for the fruit of the olive-tree, of the vine, &c.

‘ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor and the stranger.’ Levit. xxiii. 22.

‘ The wages of the hireling, who giveth thee his work, shall not remain with thee till morning.’

‘ Thou shalt not curse the deaf.’ Levit. xix. 14.

‘ Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.’ Levit. xix. 32.

It may be judged by these extracts whether it be with justice that the detractors of religion have for thirty years repeated, that these laws are *absurd, barbarous, ferocious, &c.* But it is only by reading entirely this divine code that one can judge to what a degree these calumnies are extravagant.—The laws which secure *property*, those which are relative to interior police, to agriculture, &c. are not less to be admired. ‘ In what ancient legislation,’ says the author of *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*, ‘ is there to be found any thing comparable to these laws in favour of the poor; and to those pressing exhortations to comfort the unhappy? When one reflects upon these exhortations and these laws, where humanity, and the most tender goodness of heart, are so sensibly expressed, can one see, without suffering, that great man and all his legislation taxed with ferocity and barbarity, by a celebrated writer who calls himself impartial?’

C H A P. XIII.

PHILOSOPHICAL PRECEPTS: PRECEPTS CONTAINED
IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. SUBLI-
MITY OF THE EVANGELICAL MORAL.

PARTICULAR acts of cruelty are found in the history of the people of God. In what history are they not to be found * ? It appears in holy writ, that impious nations were exterminated by the command of the Lord. But has not God a right to judge and punish creatures which he has formed ? In order to render the ancient law odious, the detractors of religion have affected to confound two things very different—the particular commands which God himself gave, at times when he was pleased to manifest himself by extraordinary prodigies—and the general laws which he prescribed ; and it is according to these laws alone,

* M. de Voltaire has quoted nothing from scripture but passages of this kind, to which he has always added aggravating circumstances of his own invention. He even very often invents both the fact and the detail. He has calumniated, in the grossest manner, all the great men of this nation, and all the prophets, without ever quoting one passage to their advantage.—One instance will give an idea of the excess of his partiality. What impieties has not he uttered upon the subject of Elisha, the beneficent prophet ! Yet it is this same prophet who, after the manner of Elijah his master, performed a miracle in favour of a poor woman ready to perish with misery. It was he who multiplied the loaves to feed a great number of persons. It was he who obtained by his prayers a son to the Shunamite who had treated him hospitably, and he afterwards raised his child up from death. It was Elisha who rendered wholesome the waters of Jericho ; who cured of the leprosy a general of the enemy and refused all his presents. It was he who, having in his power the army of the Syrians, an hostile army, not only would not suffer one of them to be put to death, but gave them to eat and drink ; retained none of them prisoners, but sent them all back to their master, &c.

according

according to these invariable precepts, that men ought to judge of religion. The laws are wise, mild, beneficent; the precepts admirable; the dogmas sublime: these are incontestable truths. Therefore this religion deserves the respect and veneration of the incredulous, even when they are exempt from partiality. It is a great triumph for religion, that those who have attacked it have never been able to do so by any other means than that of calumny. Not one of its detractors can be quoted who has not had recourse to these base means.

—What! pretended sages, who wish, say you, to instruct me, shew me at least some appearance of impartiality, acknowledge that there are fine things in that legislation which you criticise; appear to admire some of its precepts; mingle dexterously eulogium with calumny; this air of candour would perhaps be seducing. But no, you discover an inconceivable animosity, you pervert all, condemn all, and I see nothing in your declamations but gross falsehoods and furious transports. You think therefore that your readers will believe you without the least examination; you are then persuaded that they have never read holy writ, that they will never read the refutations of your pernicious works? You have computed upon their ignorance and credulity, upon the power of the passions, to which you are favourable. Alas! you may one day gather the deadly fruit of these odious calculations, but you will never destroy the eternal empire of truth; and you will leave behind you dishonoured names and tarnished reputations.

Your Highness cannot but recollect, that, in reading the scriptures, we have often thought it very strange, that a religion which presents a moral and precepts so useful to human happiness, can have enemies! What interest have not men of every class, and especially fathers of families, to support the sacred rights of this holy religion! O ye madmen! who give to your children the pernicious example of contempt and religion; ye! who disdain to bring up Christians, and who wish to form *philosophers*, what painful regret you prepare
for

for yourselves !——If your children abandon themselves to the excesses which impetuous passions produce, will you have a right to complain? They will *philosophically* reply to your inconsequent representations, that *moderate passions make men common that it is the height of folly to propose destroying the passions* *. Away with all those pedants, enamoured with a false idea of perfection. Nothing is more dangerous in a state than these declaiming moralists without understanding, and who, concentered in a narrow sphere of ideas, repeat continually what they have heard their nurses say; incessantly recommend moderation of desires, and wish to exterminate in every heart all the passions. Sensation is the soul of the passions. Now sensation or sentiment is not free; it is not because we will that we love or hate; therefore it cannot be criminal †. According to this principle, repeated in so many philosophical works, what errors, what excesses will you be able to condemn in your children? and what objections will you make to this definition of happiness? *Happiness! it is an agreeable sensation, a happy existence, a pleasure, in a word, all that is pleasing to the body. These are the only pilots which conduct to felicity.—Foreign objects, truth, knowledge, virtue, are only ideal advantages, extrinsic causes, &c* ‡. What will you be able to oppose to these philosophical maxims? If you speak of reason, they will answer you, *that nature must be given to reason for a guide, and that we must not deprive ourselves of that which gives us pleasure* §. Will you hazard some common-place expressions upon fame, duty, &c.? They will tell you; *that the soul is mortal That it is necessary to think of the body before the soul To confine ourselves to the present, which alone is in our power, is a resolution worthy of the wise* ||. If one of your children be wicked; if, to gratify his inclinations, he employ unjust means; if he

* Pensées Philosophiques.

† Les Mœurs.

‡ Discours sur la Vie Heureuse.

§ Même Discours.

|| Même Discours.

oppress, if he persecute his fellow creatures, will you have even a right to quote to him this maxim, drawn from natural law? *Do not unto others that which you would not they should do unto you.* He would answer you, that philosophy had discovered that this maxim was not *rationally just*, and that the natural law said only, *Make thy own happiness with as little injury as possible to others* †—therefore, when our advantage or pleasure shall require it, we may *do a great deal of ill to others.* What would you have to say?—If otherwise you pressed him, if you could moreover prove that the natural law is but a chimera; *a mortal soul has no obligation or duties: great honour is thought to be done to it by being pleased to decorate it with a pretended law, born with it, as well as with so many other acquired ideas; it is not deceived by this honour.*—*A well-organized soul, content with what it has, and carrying its views no farther, disdains all that is given to it, which is more than what is properly its own, and confines itself to this idea* *.—According to these principles, it will only be a natural consequence formally to deny the existence of virtue, and to consider it only as a convention which ought to vary according to times and circumstances; and which can only have personal interest for its basis. *Interest is the only judge of probity.*—Actions ought to be looked upon as indifferent in themselves, and it is the care of the state to determine upon those which are worthy of esteem or contempt; and that of the legislator, by the knowledge he ought to have of the public interest, to remark the instant when each action ceases to be virtuous and becomes vicious †. Therefore your pupil, *looking upon these actions as indifferent in themselves*, will neither have horror nor even aversion for any one of them; which, joined to violent passions, and to the principle of despising pedants who recom-

‡ J. J. Rousseau, Discours sur l'Origine et l'Inégalité des Hommes.

● Discours sur la Vie Heureuse.

† De l'Esprit.

mend

mend moderation in desires, may carry him to the greatest lengths. Will you say that these strong passions, after many extravagancies, may produce great things, brilliant actions?—Do you forget that he neither believes the liberty of man *, the immortality of the soul, nor virtue; and that his masters have taught him, that pleasures and voluptuousness are the only real good. They still teach him *that it is impossible a man should sacrifice his pleasures, his habits, and his strongest passions, to the interest of the public* †.—Such ideas ought not naturally to form excellent citizens; so much the more, that modern philosophers declaim with violence against every species of authority †.—All men ought to be equal—all property ought to be in common—all propriety is an usurpation—every master, a tyrant—the people who suffer this tyranny are idiots, &c.—These are the grand ideas which philosophy gives! A like doctrine must find few protectors among kings and sovereigns. But ye, fathers of families, is it not as much your interest to reject it? If your only child, enervated by excesses, fatigued with the world and with life, be tempted to deliver himself from an unsupportable burthen, what can restrain him? He is an atheist; or if he believe that a God exists, he thinks himself sure of obtaining his pardon, even for the most atrocious crime. Moreover, will he look upon suicide as a crime? So many modern philosophers have approved

* The following is a philosophical sentence upon this point: “En s’abandonnant à son caractère on s’épargne du moins les efforts inutiles qu’on fait pour y résister.” De l’Esprit.—By following the impulses of our character, we avoid at least the trouble of resisting them.

‡ Même ouvrage.

† Discours sur l’Origine de l’Inégalité des Hommes, de Rousseau—Le Code de la Nature—L’ouvrage intitulé de l’Esprit—Révolution de l’Amérique—Le Prophète Philosophe—De l’Homme, de ses facultés et de son éducation—Le Militaire Philosophe—Histoire politique et philosophique de l’établissement des Européens dans les deux Indes—and many other works of this kind, not only full of impiety, but of the most seditious declamations.

of it!—among others, one of the most famous of this age. Will your son be ignorant that this great philosopher finds that the laws which punish suicide are unjust; that he establishes, ‘ that every wretch may
 ‘ put an end to his sufferings; that government and
 ‘ society have no right to require that one’s life should
 ‘ be preserved in order to be useful to them; and that
 ‘ God himself cannot condemn us to receive favours
 ‘ which overwhelm us, by prolonging our existence.*”

If you have daughters, and that their foolish ostentation ruin their family, *philosophy* will furnish them with reasons and excuses which will confound you, if you dare to complain. They would tell you, modest women, by giving to beggars and to criminals, are authorised by their confessors; gallant women, by the desire of pleasing. These cherish useful citizens, those, men useless, or even enemies to the nation†. It must be confessed, that without philosophy it would have never been found out, that a woman who gives alms to the poor, and who carries succour to prisoners confined in dungeons, only does bad actions; whilst the woman who ruins her husband and children to enrich a millener, does so fine an action, that all the confessors ought to advise their penitents to follow this patriotic example.—Moreover, this teaches us one consolatory thing, which is, that there are many more excellent citizens than there were thought to be before this discovery.—Finally, if the conduct of your daughters dishonour you, you will again see them, without shame, and without remorse, maintain, *that modesty is only a prejudice or falsehood*; that women without morals are those only *who can be useful to the state*; that *debauchery is no stain upon reputation*; that *corruption of morals is not incompatible with the grandeur and happiness of a state*‡; that, as it is possible a man who has robbed,

† Lettres Persannes. The author *de l’Esprit* says so also.

* De l’Esprit.

‡ Ibid.

calumniated, abjured his religion for motives of interest, and has sent his children to the hospital, &c. may be the *best and most virtuous of men*, it may also happen that a woman without the least modesty, without any principles, a woman who counts her footman among her lovers, may nevertheless have a pure soul, a *divine angelic celestial soul*†. This is what the most celebrated philosophers of the present age have taught !*

Do you believe that paternal authority and the affections of consanguinity can have any influence over the conduct of your children ? But do not these philosophical children believe that, *in the great principles of the interest of one's country*, it is of use to extinguish paternal and filial love ? that the ties of father and son may be prejudicial to those of citizens, and only produce vices under the appearances of virtues of small societies, whose interests, generally opposed to that of the public, would in the end extinguish every species of patriotic love ? One cannot withdraw the people from these calamities, but by breaking all the ties of consanguinity, and by declaring the citizens children of the state. This is the only means of stopping the course of vice, &c.* Moreover, the affections of nature are illusions only, prejudices : we no longer love our children the moment they have attained the age of independence. The father then sees in them nothing but greedy heirs. And if he love his grandchildren, it is because he looks upon them as the enemies of his enemies†. Let us, add that every species of dependence being unjust, the son depends no more upon the father, than the father does upon the son §. In a word, as to filial love there is no obligation so general as not to admit of being dispensed with When one experiences nothing but the hatred of a father, all distinction that is then due to him is to treat him as a respectable enemy ||. Therefore, if your son be discontented with you, if he

† Confessions de J. J. Rousseau.

* De l'Esprit.

† Ibid.

§ Code de la Nature.

|| Les mœurs.

take a paternal severity for a mark of hatred, he will treat you as an enemy.—A Christian ought not only to forgive his enemies, but to render them good for evil. A philosopher has other maxims. According to the moderns, great souls, are those which know best how to hate. Honest men are those only who are never reconciled. Rascals know how to do harm or to revenge themselves, but they know not how to hate*. Hatred is therefore a virtue, and particularly a virtue of great souls. Modern philosophers have displayed this pretended greatness by defaming, calumniating, and persecuting their enemies; you will therefore be thwarted by your son; he will seek after, he will seize every means to be revenged of you.—Unfortunate father, will you have even one tender and faithful friend to wipe away your tears?—What do I say? Alas! perhaps a philosopher, equally false and inhuman, will still deprive you of this necessary consolation. He who sees in virtue no more than an human invention, ought not to believe in friendship. This pure and soft connection appears to him, without doubt, only a mercenary intercourse, of which interest alone is the basis. He blushes not to say, that a man of understanding, by predicting the moment when two friends shall cease to be useful to each other, may calculate the moment of their rupture, as an astronomer calculates the moment of an eclipse †.—For

* *Vie de M. Turgot*, p. 288.—A very philosophical work against religion and government, wherein all bounds which, till now, good sense had prescribed to eulogium and satire are overleaped. I have declared that I would not criticise any living author of my own country; but this author has not declared himself; nothing, not even his manner of writing, proves that he is a Frenchman.—Otherwise, an anonymous author, who hides himself for the purpose only of attacking with impunity, merits no regard. I shall therefore make, in the following chapter, some quotations drawn from the work.

† *De l'Esprit*.—I will suspend for a moment these odious quotations, whose scrupulous exactitude may be verified by all the world; but I will take them up again; and what I shall quote of them, in the chapter of *philosophical fanaticism*, surpasses infinitely the folly and depravity of all that have been already read.

my part, I avow, as a mother, and as an instructress, that I have not been able to hear, without trembling, this frightful language. As soon as my children were able to understand me, I hastened to say to them, with the apostle, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit* *. I put the holy scriptures into their hands; could I have offered them stronger lessons, more particular or affecting ones upon filial love and respect? Let us compare these divine precepts with those of philosophy. *My son, hear the instruction of thy father.* Prov. chap. i.—*He that wasteth his father, and chafeth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.* Prov. ch. xix.—*Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer.* Ch. xxviii.—*He that honoureth his mother is one that layeth up treasure. Whoso honoureth his father, shall have joy of his own children, and when he maketh his prayer he shall be heard. He that honoureth his father, shall have a long life; and he that is obedient unto the Lord, shall be a comfort to his mother. He that feareth the Lord will honour his father, and will do service unto his parents as to his masters. Honour thy father and mother, both in word and deed, for the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children, but the curse of the mother rooteth out foundations. My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten: and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up. In the day of thy affliction it shall be remembered: thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather. He that forsaketh his father is a blasphemer, and he that angereth his mother is cursed of God.* Ecclesiasticus, chap. iii.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first

* Epist. of St. Paul to the Colossians, ch. ii.

commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. St. Paul to the Ephesians, chap. vi.—*Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.* St. Paul to the Colossians, chap. iii.—*Hear me now therefore, says the wise man, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth, lest thou say at length, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof! and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!* Prov. chap. v. 7. 12, 13.—*Who so loveth instruction, loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.* Prov. chap. xii. 1.—Can a religious child, who receives such commandments, such exhortations, and who believes them to be from God himself, want docility, respect, and tenderness for the authors of his existence?

Philosophical instructor, however virtuous you may be, the authority of your lessons will be frivolous and vain. Will you give your frivolous sentiments and opinions as sacred laws? Why should your pupil give to the reason of a man that absolute empire over his own? You have only the right of exhorting; the Christian instructor has that of sovereignly commanding, and he is the interpreter of Heaven. It is not a weak and mortal being, subject to error, which the disciple listens to; it is the voice of God that he hears, they are his orders which he receives; it is the author of the universe who speaks to him, who prescribes to him his duties; it is he who threatens him, and who promises him eternal rewards. Although you had the talents of Rousseau, you would only have over your pupil a weak and transient authority; and mine will be unbounded, its principle is sacred. I have known at once how to strike the imagination of my pupil, to touch his heart, and convince his reason. In his infancy, invested in his eyes with an august character, I subjected him to respect by gaining his affections: I was to him what Moses was to the Hebrews; I made him know the will of Heaven, its immutable decrees, and the prodigies of its power. I exhorted, I com-
manded,

manded, I punished in the name of God; all my discourses had weight, all my actions were striking. I was hearkened to with admiration; I was only the organ of a supreme voice. I was implicitly obeyed: and if my pupil dared to murmur in secret, *God knows it*, said I, *let confession make amends for the fault*. Without this absolute power, no affecting lessons can be given, such as can make deep and indelible impressions. The lessons of a man are forgotten; but when one has firmly believed, during fifteen years, to have heard God himself, received principles are always respected. And what principles? How pure and sublime are they! No, my daughters will never think that *modesty is a prejudice*, and that the pomp and profusion of a coquette are more meritorious than the alms of a charitable woman. My daughters will always believe, that *a shame-faced and faithful woman is a double grace, and her continent mind cannot be valued*. Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxvi. 15.—that *a gracious woman retaineth honour*. Prov. chap. xi. They will never forget that charming description of an amiable woman—*As the sun when it riseth in the high heaven, so is the beauty of a good wife, in the ordering of her house*. Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxvi. 16—and this affecting portrait, *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she stretcheth forth her hands to the needy. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*. Prov. chap. xxxi.

My children will not consider the ties of blood as prejudicial to the state, and friendship as chimerical; they will ever love me, and the tender union will constantly subsist between us. I repeated to them the words of our Saviour—*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another*. St. John, chap. xiii.—*A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city*. Prov. chap. xviii. 19.—*Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* Pf. cxxxiii.—*Say not unto thy*

neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee. Prov. chap. iii.—My disciples will never adopt the detestable maxims, which establish, that happiness is nothing more than pleasure, and that which pleases the body; that truth and virtue are only ideal; that there is greatness in hatred; that there is a littleness in recommending moderation in our desires. The following maxims, which religion has graven in their hearts, are very different. *Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.* Prov. ch. viii.—*By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, honour, and life.* Prov. chap. xxii.—*The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.* Prov. chap. iii.—*Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?* Chap. xvii.—*Wisdom is glorious, and never fadeth away; yea, she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her.* Wisdom of Solomon, chap. vi. 12.—*Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.* Prov. chap. xxiv. and xxv.—*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar,* 1 Epistle of St. John, ch. iv.—*Have regard to thy name, for that shall continue with thee above a thousand great treasures of gold. A good life hath but few days, but a good name endureth for ever.* Ecclesiasticus, chap. xli. 12. and 13.—*But the path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.* Prov. chap. iv.—*As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.* Prov. chap. x.—*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.* St. Matt. chap. v.—*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* St. James, Ep. chap. i.—My pupils, far from loving independence, will seek for counsels,

sels, will listen with joy to the most severe exhortations. They know that *he is in the way of life that keepeth instruction*; but *that he that refuseth reproof, erreth*. A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him; neither will he go unto the wise. Prov. chap. x. and xv.—They will have none of that foolish pride, with which philosophers of all ages, and more especially those of the present, have been reproached. They know, that *when pride cometh, then cometh shame*; but *with the lowly is wisdom*; that *the Lord will destroy the house of the proud*. Prov. chap. xi. and xv.

Que le commencement de l'orgueil de l'homme est de commettre une apostasie à l'égard de Dieu, parce que son cœur se retire de celui qui l'a créé; car le principe de tout péché est l'orgueil: Que l'orgueil n'a point été créé avec l'homme, non plus que la colere avec le sexe des femmes. Ecclesiastique, chap. xviii. They will also remember this discourse of the elder Toby, *Ne souffrez jamais que l'orgueil domine, ou dans vos pensées, ou dans vos discours car c'est par l'orgueil que tous les maux ont commencé* *.—[The original of these two passages are given, because the corresponding ones could not be found in our Bible.]—And that, finally, *the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*. Ep. of St. Paul to the Galatians, chap. v.—These lessons and exhortations are not *philosophical* ones, but they are pure and sublime. Philosophers boast greatly of having spoke in favour of *beneficence*; religion does better, it commands it. Will the exclamations and eulogiums of a few men have more weight than the ordinances of God? Moralists and philosophers, what have you said upon the subject, that may be compared to these divine precepts? *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again. Who so stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard*. Prov. chap. xix. and xxi.

* The rebellion of satan, the fall of the first man.

Turn not thine eye away from the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee: for if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him. My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest any thing. Lo, is not a word better than a gift? but both are with a gracious man. Ecclesiasticus, chap. iv. and xviii.—

Give alms of thy substance, and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly; if thou have but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little. For thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity. Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness. For alms is a good gift for all that give it in the sight of the Most High. Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked. Tobit, chap. iv.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Epist. of St. Paul to Tim. chap. vi.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. St. Paul to the Hebrews, chap. xiii.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. St. Matt. chap. v.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. St. Matt. chap. vi.

Jesus Christ will say, in the day of judgment, to those who shall have given clothes to the poor, set prisoners at liberty, visited the sick, cherished the indigent, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily,

I say

I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. — Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me. St. Matt. chap. xxv.

Let there be added to these commandments all those of the same kind which I have already quoted from Deuteronomy and Leviticus; and it cannot be otherwise than confessed, that philosophy has never produced any so energetic and affecting. But philosophers exclaim, We have said the finest things in the world upon toleration! What you have said which is *excellent* you have taken from a Christian moralist, whom you have copied without quoting him. Do you think you have spoken better than the immortal Fenelon, upon the indulgence which humanity owes to human weaknesses and errors? And this for ever illustrious writer, whose virtue is equal to his genius, has given such useful lessons and beneficent precepts, for no other reason but because he took them from the Gospel. — True friends of toleration, would you find in all its purity this spirit of peace and mildness, so necessary to human felicity, open the Gospel, hearken to these sacred instructions.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Matt. chap. v. — Rejoice with them that rejoice; and weep with them that weep. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. St. Paul to the Romans, chap. xii. — As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. St. Paul to the Galatians, chap. vi.

Him that is feeble in the faith, receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations. Rom. chap. xiv.

We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Romans, chap. xv.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have

have not charity, I am nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind: charity envieth not: charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; beareth all things, hopeth all things. First Epist. St. Paul to the Corinthians, chap. xiii.—Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. Thessalonians, chap. v.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Second Epist. of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, ch. iii.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. St. Paul's Second Epist. to Tim. chap. ii.—Put them in mind (the Disciples) to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work; to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. St. Paul's Epist. to Titus, ch. iii.

And this is the religion which modern philosophers have called a religion in which there is no toleration! What can have been their motive for calumniating it, and their end in wishing to destroy it? This is their reiterated answer; *The interest of humanity*. But the interest of fathers of families, of children, of husbands, of wives, of sovereigns, of subjects, of the poor, of the unfortunate, of masters, of servants; finally, of every class of men, and of every being of which society is composed; I require to know if it be not their interest to believe that religion which prescribes every virtue, which enters into a detail of all our duties, and which alone offers consolation to the wretched deprived of every human succour?—I will finish this chapter by some quotations, which will finally demonstrate this important truth.

The

The scripture says to all men; *Fear God and keep his commandments.* Ecclesiastes, chap. xii.—*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*—*Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose thou none of his ways; for the froward is an abomination to the Lord.*—*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*—*Buy the truth and sell it not, and do the same with wisdom, doctrine, and understanding.*—*Who boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.* Prov. chap. iii. ch. xvi. ch. xxv.—*Abstain from all appearance of evil.* St. Paul to the Thessalonians, chap. v.—*Let your conversation be without covetousness.* To the Hebrews, chap. xiii.—*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.* To St. James, chap. ii.—*Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.* First Epist. of St. Peter, chap. ii.

The scriptures say to husbands—*Who so findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* Prov. chap. xviii.—*Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*—*Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* St. Paul to the Ephesians, chap. v.—*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.* St. Paul to the Hebrews, chap. xiii.

We have seen the commandments which religion gives to children: these are the instructions which it gives to fathers and tutors.—*Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.* Prov. chap. xxix.

He that chastiseth his son, shall have joy in him, and shall rejoice of him among his acquaintance. Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxx.

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. Prov. chap. xix.

And

And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. St. Paul to the Ephesians, chap. vi.

Religion says to sovereigns—*If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.—The prince who oppresses his people will excite seditions and revolts.—When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn.—Mercy and truth are the safety of kings. The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. Justice enlightens the people. The king by judgment establisheth the land. A numerous people is the glory of the sovereign.* Prov. xxix. &c*.

This is what the Gospel prescribes to subjects:—*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they (rulers) are God's ministers.. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.* St. Paul to the Romans, chap. xiii.

Let these precepts be compared with those of modern philosophy, which incessantly declaims against *authority*; which pretends that a *perfect equality* ought to reign among men; which insinuates in its works the most moderate of seditious principles, or which formally establishes them with audacity, as will be proved in the following chapter.

If it be so much the interest of kings to maintain the sacred rights of religion, it is no less our own in-

* M. de Voltaire has said, that there is not to be found, in the Proverbs of Solomon, a single sentence which regards the manner of governing. *Dict. Philosoph.* And this book is full of admirable maxims upon policy and government.

terest.

terest to cause them to be respected in the interior of our families. What must be the effect of philosophical books upon the minds of persons without knowledge, without education, and condemned to servitude ! For my part, I avow, that if I saw in the hands of my servants *Les Pensées Philosophiques—Le Dictionnaire Philosophique—Le Discours sur la Vie Heureuse—that sur l'Origine de l'Egalité parmi les Hommes—Les Mœurs—Les Confessions de J. J. Rousseau—Le Tableau Philosophique de l'Etablissement des Européens dans les Indes—the works intituled De l'Esprit—Le Code de la Nature, &c. &c.* I should be much alarmed, and I should not at all think myself safe in my house. What must a servant, who hears all these authors spoken of with admiration, think ; who, for instance, hears his masters praise, with enthusiasm, the mind, principles, and genius of Rousseau ? What impressions will be made upon him by the Confessions of that celebrated man, so much extolled, who being a *footman* committed a *theft* and charged an *innocent person with it* : of that man who abjured his religion for money : of that man who had no morals, and who was guilty of the blackest ingratitude towards his benefactors : who was inhuman towards his children, and who, after all his declarations, pretends to *be the best of men* ? How many wretches of this class has the philosophy of this age perverted ! It has produced more suicides, and crimes of every kind, than misfortune and misery have at any time been the causes of. I could, by condemning his opinions, and complaining of his errors, be the friend of a man, partisan of false philosophy ; but nothing can persuade me to keep a *servant* who is a *philosopher*. The surest method is to chuse those who are good Christians, and to set them an example of respect for a religion which gives such affecting and sublime precepts upon the respective duties of masters and servants.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.
1. Ep. of St. Peter, chap. ii.

Servants,

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will, doing service unto the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall be received of the Lord. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. Ep. of St. Paul to the Ephesians, chap. vi.

Let us hearken to the useful lessons which religion gives to the rich.—Better is a little, with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Prov. chap. xv.

He that loveth gold shall not be justified. Gold is a stumbling-block unto them that sacrifice unto it; and every fool shall be taken therewith. Blessed is the rich that is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold. Who is he? and we will call him blessed, for wonderful things hath he done among his people. Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxi.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. St. Matt. chap. vi.

Finally, let us hear what consolations religion offers to the unfortunate.—Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. St. Matt. chap. vi.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed unto us. Rejoice in hope, be patient, in tribulation: continuing instant in prayer. St. Paul to the Romans, chap. viii. and xiii.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye shall fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, . . . and crowneth it with life. Ep. of St. James, chap. i.

These.

These are the powerful motives of courage, and the consolation which philosophy inhumanly snatches from the wretched, which can have no other! Let your Highness recollect that paralytic woman, to whom you have shewn, during two years, so many affecting marks of concern and compassion. Covered with ulcers, deprived of the use of all her members, suffering uncommon torments, she has lived seventeen years in that frightful state, not only without ever once letting a murmur go forth from her mouth, but not even a complaint. Your Highness has heard her say, *that her sufferings were dear to her, because she knew that she should receive rewards which would be proportioned to them.* You have seen her preserve, when in the most severe pain, and in the agitations of the most horrid convulsions, a serene countenance, and lift up to heaven her eyes animated with the expression of gratitude; and you have heard her cry out, *O, my God! I thank thee; what happiness dost thou prepare for me!* Words truly sublime, and which prove, better than all my weak discourses, the supernatural power and beneficent utility of religion.

It will perhaps be said, that I have too much multiplied quotations in this chapter. I have quoted, it is true, precepts which no person should be ignorant of, but which, unhappily, are at present almost forgotten. It is only the declamations of philosophers which are known, and their absurd calumnies looked upon by the incredulous and ignorant as so many demonstrated truths. Many people have read a thousand times this philosophical sentence, *The Christian religion is intolerant*; but these have seldom or never read the Gospel; still less, that long succession of books which compose the Old Testament: and, knowing nothing but the sophisms and falsehoods of the detractors of religion, have concluded that a true Christian can only be an austere and intolerant man; in fine, a furious and barbarous fanatic. Besides, it is not an extract which can give a just idea of that admirable spirit of mild-

ness,

ness, indulgence, and humanity, which shines forth constantly in the Gospel. I have only quoted a certain number of maxims, and I might have quoted an infinity of others as fully to the purpose, and as affecting, without speaking of those ingenious and energetic parables, whose end is to inspire *tolerance, beneficence, and forgiveness of injuries.*

C H A P. XIV.

OF RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHIC FANATICISM.

MODERN philosophers have particularly endeavoured to shew all the horror of fanaticism, and to enumerate the crimes which it is capable of producing. But they have said nothing reasonable upon the subject, which had not been said a thousand times before the publication of their works, and in a more useful and judicious manner : for the most sure means of destroying fanaticism, is to demonstrate that it is reprobated by religion : it is with the gospel particularly that it will be victoriously combated.—But modern philosophers have had only one aim, that of ruling over the minds of men. It was difficult, at the beginning of the present age, to astonish and to subjugate the admiration of a public, which yet deplored the recent loss of the greatest men France ever produced. It seemed that these sublime geniuses had reaped all the immortal laurels, which reason and virtue, united to talents, could obtain. Struck with these discouraging considerations, the great wits of the day engaged in desperate measures. Well, said they, let us strike out another road ; let us confound all ideas, overturn every principle ; let us flatter the passions, destroy religion, and we will call this new doctrine, *Philosophy*. We will write *philosophical* tragedies, and introduce therein a certain number of seditious maxims, and an infinity of verses against priests and religion. We will write *philosophical* tales, licentious ones, and full of impiety. We will also be *moralists* ; for that purpose we will pilfer from Fenelon, Pascal, Massillon, and others ; and we will add thereto a fund of *philosophy*, that is to say, of pyrrhonism, and of free and voluptuous descriptions, which may seduce and corrupt youth. We will write history, not like Bossuet, but, like *philosophers*, insolently.

ly apostrophizing kings; treating contumeliously sovereign authority, as well as whole nations; calumniating the clergy, popes, and religion. It must be acknowledged that Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Fenelon, &c. were men of genius; but in all our works, we will criticise those of these great men, sometimes openly, and at others, by appearing to admire them. We will remark that the prose of *Telemachus* is a little tiresome: we will add, that Pascal was a madman: we will also say, that Boileau was only a man-of wit: we will make notes full of injustice and partiality against the great Corneille: we will repeat, that there is in the inimitable fables of la Fontaine but one only merit, *that of their being natural*: we will maintain that Bossuet, that eloquent and sublime defender of the faith, was but an atheist, &c. &c.: and afterwards we will add, that all these writers were deficient in *philosophy*, and that none but *philosophical* authors ought to be admired.

Our morality, much more commodious than that of Fenelon, Pascal, or Bossuet, will, without doubt, procure to us a great number of partisans. We will give the title of *Philosopher* to all our admirers; and we will cover with ridicule those who shall reject our doctrine. If our falsehoods and errors be animadverted upon, or detected, we will answer by injuries, calumnies, and pleasantry, infallible means of forcing, in the end, reason to silence. Then, absolute masters of the field, we will repeat, for forty years without interruption, all that our adversaries shall have refuted, from the first step we made in our career.

This plan, conceived with so much artifice, and pursued for nearly half a century with so much perseverance, has but too well succeeded to the wishes of the founders of false philosophy. It seems that they have verified, in our days, the prediction of the apostle, who said, *This know also, that in the last day perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy—without natural affection,*
truce-

truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good—men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men. Second of St. Paul to Timothy, chap. iii.

There was no fanaticism in France before the sect of modern philosophers was formed; but they have affected to believe that it existed always, in order to have a pretext for declaiming with violence upon so interesting a subject. Supposing, which is not true, that fanaticism had even then produced disturbances and crimes, could it have been more effectually combated, than by opposing it to the maxims of the Gospel? To destroy fanaticism, was it necessary to run a risk of corrupting manners, of removing from the wicked a formidable impediment to vice, of taking from the unfortunate their only consolation, and of depriving virtue of its greatest and most sublime hope? Finally, was it necessary to write and repeat, with so much animosity, *There is no religion, there is no God!* at a time when it might be said, *Religion reprobates, abhors your fury: you offend the God of peace, whom you think you honour? Read the Gospel, believe this divine book only, the sacred depositary of eternal truth.* What have these philosophers said upon the rights of humanity, upon tolerance and fraternal indulgence, which the Gospel does not say with more force and energy? They have exhorted men to love one another, to live in peace; and the Gospel commands them so to do. Did philosophers think that their exhortations would have more weight than the ordinances of God? If they were guided by public interest, have they not acted contrary to their real design; and can so absurd a conduct, united to such an extravagant pride, be conceived? But no; the love of humanity, independent even of faith, could never have inspired such projects. This mild and pure sentiment would have shewn all the utility of a religion which prescribes every virtue, and which so formally commands us to forgive; to bear with the weaknesses, the errors of those who go astray; to employ, in order

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to call them back to their duty, nothing but mildness, patience, and reason; *to do good to all mankind, even to those who are not entered by faith into the house of the Lord*; to pray for our enemies, to render them good for evil, &c.—This is, nevertheless, the religion which philosophers have sought to destroy! And to arrive at that end, what artifices have they not made use of? Among others, that of attributing to fanaticism an infinity of crimes, which ambition only produced; that of giving birth to the League, and the regicide of Charles the First.—But although it were true that fanaticism had been the cause of all the crimes which philosophers attribute to it, what could be concluded from thence against a religion which pronounces the most terrible anathemas against the same crimes? Will the incredulous say, that since so beneficent a religion can inspire such excesses, men would be more happy without worship, and without religion? But these excesses are only rare and transient ills; religion was, for the most part, the pretext only of these outrageous furies; it is the human passions alone, ambition, hatred, vengeance, which have given birth to fanaticism. Alas! what have not men in all ages made a bad use of! There is no virtuous sentiment which has not produced some errors or crimes. Because patriotic love has produced regicides, will it be maintained that it is necessary to extinguish in every breast that noble sentiment? No, without doubt: it is only necessary to regulate it. The passions and ignorance form the fanatic: enlighten, instruct him; teach him the maxims of the Gospel, and he will tremble at his folly.—There is another fanaticism, as violent, and infinitely more dangerous, which is *philosophical fanaticism*. How is it possible to reduce to reason a head exalted by so many daring writings, in which those who brave the laws and decorum, and who declaim with the greatest violence against religion and the sacred authority of kings, are dignified with the titles of sages and benefactors of mankind? If this fanatic philosopher commits an outrage

outrage upon manners with a cynical effrontery, if he sets an example of the most audacious impiety, if he publishes seditious maxims, if he dares invite the people to overturn every throne, what shall be said to him, to make him know the enormity of his excess? Where will be found a code of modern philosophy which condemns all these transports? It would be sought for in vain; it does not exist. Whilst, on the contrary, this fanatic can justify his vices and furies by quoting authorities the most imposing for a philosopher. Finally, what answer will be made to him, when he shall add, coinciding with all the modern philosophers—I speak, it is true, against religion, government, and morals, but I say what I think; one ought to speak the truth, or that which one believes to be so, even when it may appear prejudicial and pernicious?—But, in this case, without betraying truth, one may hold one's tongue.—No: I must, I will speak! What do I say? speak! I will write, I will propagate my opinions throughout the universe, and I desire passionately that they may descend to posterity.—Philosophers pride themselves in doubting of every thing, therefore you have no fixed and decided opinion; there is no constant truth for you; why, therefore, that vain desire of making profelytes?—I doubt, it is true, of the existence of God, of the immortality of the soul; but I am certain that every religion is false. I could wish that not one existed upon earth, and that philosophy alone governed mankind.—Do you think it not very necessary to many people, that they should neither doubt of the existence of God, nor of the immortality of the soul?—That may be; but I doubt of them, and I publish my doubts.—You cannot be certain, you avow it yourself; there is then no question of publishing a truth; Why spread a pernicious doubt, which may grieve, afflict, and pervert so many wretches? I do not enquire the reason why you wish there was no religion upon earth; you have told it me; it is, *in order that philosophy alone may govern mankind.*—Without doubt, and I desire it, for the interest only of men: men would be
the

the better for it. If they believed nothing, or, at least, if they believed that the Supreme Being will reward only, and does not know how to punish, they would be the better for it.—I do not see the proof of this, in the conduct and manners of your profelytes.—It is religion which corrupts manners.—What! the Christian religion, the Gospel, corrupt manners!—*Yes, morality is corrupted only by its mixture with religion* *. would even destroy, annihilate all human authorities and powers, sovereigns, their ministers, the great: these are the objects of my hatred! All men ought to be equal; they have all a right to break the chains which they find heavy.—What do I hear! Will you dare to publish these horrid maxims, which may arm regicidal hands?—‘ Yes, I dare publish them. I ‘ will cry out, People of the earth, will you be happy? Demolish every temple, overturn every ‘ throne †. Philosophy ought to be in the place of ‘ divinity upon the earth; philosophy alone enlightens ‘ and comforts mankind, because it makes them know ‘ and detest tyranny and imposition. Fly, ‘ fly from churches, imposition reigns there: hearken ‘ no longer to your superiors: flattery, which has corrupted them, has rendered them unworthy of your ‘ homage: substitute to one and the other, writers of ‘ genius; nature has made them the only ministers of ‘ truth—the only incorruptible organs of morality— ‘ they are born the magistrates of their fellow-citizens. ‘ The country is their temple, the nation their tribunal, the public their judge, and not the despot who ‘ does not understand them, or the minister who will ‘ not listen to them.—No, it is to the wise only of the ‘ earth to whom it belongs to make laws, and all the ‘ people ought to be eager to obey them. . . . Fortu-

* Vie de M. Turgot, p. 178.

† Revolution de l’Amérique.

' nate island of Ceylon! thou wert worthy of the
 ' happiness which reigned in thy bosom; for thou
 ' obligedst thy sovereign to observe the law, and thou
 ' wouldst have condemned him to death, as the most
 ' obscure insurgent, if he had dared to violate it.
 ' O ye people, will ye never know your prerogatives?
 ' Ought not this ancient and venerable custom to sub-
 ' sist in every country upon earth? Believe, there-
 ' fore, that it is the basis of every government, wherein
 ' it is not meant to stupify and degrade mankind; and
 ' that the law is nothing, if it be not a sword which
 ' is indiscriminately held over every head, and which
 ' cuts off all those which elevate themselves above the
 ' horizontal plain upon which it moves*. You then
 ' who, from the height of your thrones, which only
 ' dazzle the ignorant, insolently cause yourselves to be
 ' adored, scourges of human nature! illustrious tyrants
 ' of your fellow creatures! men who have the title
 ' only of kings, princes, monarchs, and emperors,
 ' chiefs, sovereigns; finally, all you, who, in elevating
 ' yourselves above your fellow creatures, have lost all
 ' idea of equality, equity, sociability, and truth, I
 ' summon you to the tribunal of reason; listen to
 ' me:—If this unhappy globe has been your prey, it
 ' is not to the wisdom of your predecessors, nor to the
 ' virtues of the first of mankind, that you are indebted
 ' for it; it is to stupidity, fear, barbarism, and super-
 ' stition—these are your titles But do not
 ' glory in your having so long gone unpunished, nor in
 ' the profound silence to which you have reduced all
 ' the victims of your intolerable pride. This silence
 ' is the repose of despair, and the terrible signal of
 ' universal insurrection Lo! many thousands of
 ' men, despoiled of their all by your severity, em-
 ' boldened by a spirit of liberty, encouraged by a real
 ' natural right, whose unchangeable principles philoso-
 ' phy will explain to them, will one day be daring

* Histoire Philosophique et Politique de l'Etablissement
 des Européens dans les deux Indes.

enough to reclaim their rights They have
 hands ; if they cannot make use of them to cultivate
 a portion of the earth, their own property, let them
 employ them in freeing that same earth from mon-
 sters which devour it. What risk will they run in
 dying ? It is better to die than to serve as trophies
 to men stupified by pride and steeped in vice *.
 Unhappy France ! all the sages who live in thy
 bosom, pride themselves in denying thee for their
 country : thou canst no more, under the name that
 thou bearest, make thyself celebrated ; thou art
 to-day the most disgraced of nations, and the con-
 tempt of Europe ; no salutary crisis will restore thee
 to liberty, and it is by a consumption that thou wilt
 perish †. Was it necessary that the sages of the earth
 should defer for so long a time to make the cry of
 truth resound ? and that pusillanimous attentions
 should have discouraged them from enlightening their
 brethren ? Rise up then, philosophers of every
 nation Reveal the mysteries which hold the
 universe in chains ‡ ; cover with all the shame it
 merits, that religion, that mask with which the
 hypocrite covers himself to deceive those whose cre-
 dulity may be useful to him §. Teach every people
 that government derives its power from society only ;
 and that, being established for its welfare alone, it is
 evident that it can revoke this power when its interest
 requires it, change the form of government, extend
 or limit the power which it delegates to its chiefs,
 over whom it always reserves a supreme authority ||.
 Above all, devote to the execration of the whole
 world, those frantics who spill their blood according
 to the orders of him, who from a motive of vile in-

* Le Prophète Philosophe.

† De l'homme, de ses facultés et de son éducation.

‡ Histoire Philosophique et Politique, &c.

§ Le Militaire Philosophe.

Syst. de la Nature.

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‘terest leads his citizens on to carnage. It is good, say they, to die for one’s country ! But is there any thing more base, shameful, or dishonourable, than to sacrifice one’s self to the contemptible vanity of an inhuman tyrant ? Is there any thing more abject than to serve him as a footstool, whereby he may attain that power which he cannot do otherwise than abuse † ?—Those who ought to be punished, are those barbarous and sedentary princes, who, from their cabinets, command, during the moment of digestion, the massacre of a million of men, and who afterwards solemnly thank God for it *.”

These are philosophers, and philosophers the most renowned, who exhort people of every nation to destroy temples and worship, to massacre kings and potentates, and to suffer no authority except that of *philosophers* ! I ask every impartial person, if this horrid fanaticism be not a thousand times more dangerous than that inspired by religion ? Philosophical fanaticism is only the result of audacious opinions spread in the most moderate works of pretended modern philosophers ; whilst religious fanaticism, far from being a consequence, or even an exaggeration of the principles of Christianity, offers the most complete and the most striking opposition to the maxims of the Gospel. Philosophical fanaticism is, if you will, an abuse of philosophy : religious fanaticism cannot be an abuse of religion. The most noble sentiments of the human heart have but too often produced errors and crimes, because all excess is, in its nature, vicious ; but the excess of true piety cannot become so. The excess of *humility, patience, disinterestedness, charity, self-denial*, the disgust of all perishable possessions, will never produce revolts, murders, and parricides. The Gospel does not prescribe shining virtues, which may degenerate into vices ; but mild and beneficent ones, which excess renders more affecting and sublime. Should the mad or furious commit

† Systeme Social.

* Micromégas, Conte de M. de Voltaire.

violences positively forbidden by, clear and precise laws, and that, to gain the multitude, they pretended to obey those laws which formally condemn them, would it be necessary to cry out to the seduced people, Abolish your laws, cease to respect the legislator; hearken to and believe us only, who defend you from violence? Would not it be more just and useful to say, You are deceived; consult your laws, they prescribe humanity, patience, submission and fidelity to your superiors*; they forbid you vengeance and a persecuting zeal. If, by our own authority, we exhorted you to gentleness and indulgence, you might disdain our representations: we are but men, subject, like yourselves, to error; but you ought to believe the legislator whom you have so long revered: inform yourselves therefore of his laws, and you will know that, far from following, you violate them all?

It is certain that a religious fanatic is but a madman, who acts blindly, without having the most superficial idea of the religion he thinks he defends; or an hypocrite, who makes of a sacred name a pretext for his enthusiasm. You may, with the Gospel, enlighten the one and confound the other. But with what book of *modern philosophy* will you destroy philosophical fanaticism, since all those works contain audacious opinions and principles, of which this terrible fanaticism is the frightful result? Let it be again remarked, that religious fanaticism has but one object, or one only pretext, religion; consequently it cannot produce permanent ills. It can trouble the state in times only of heresy, disputes, and controversy; and even then the discord which it excites is not spread universally throughout the universe: it has neither the intention nor the dreadful power to stir up all the people to revolt at once. It is not thus with philosophical fanaticism,

* Without excepting those even who might be so unhappy as to err in faith; seeing that Jesus Christ said, in speaking of a pagan emperor, **RENDER UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CÆSAR'S.**

which

which braves all decorum, which sets an example of the most unbounded audacity, which deifies the authors of the most licentious productions, which gives to these corrupters of public morals the august name of *benefactors to mankind!*—treating as prejudices decency and modesty; flattering and favouring the passions; extolling luxury; insulting kings, their ministers, and magistrates; declaiming against government; proposing to nations the total abolition of worship, and of laws; exhorting all the people on earth to revolt and parricide.—Such is philosophical fanaticism. It is not, then, a local vice, nor a transient evil, produced by a particular cause; it is a devouring fire, which may consume the whole earth, and which will never want fuel as long as men shall have a taste for voluptuousness and independence.

C H A P. XV.

OF TOLERANCE.

TOLERANCE was a word of rallying belonging to the philosophic party, and *implacable vengeance* was ever its fundamental maxim. Preaching fraternal union; extolling humanity, indulgence, and liberty especially; pursuing with animosity, with fury, those whom they could not bring into subjection; pretending to sacrifice every thing to *truth*; to be inspired by *truth* only; that they wrote but to render homage to *truth*; and, during forty or fifty years, publishing, printing, reprinting, saying, repeating, without interruption, without intermission, an infinity of fables, falsehoods, and calumnies; finally, outraging the Divinity, insulting sovereigns, braving the laws, remaining unpunished, yet crying out against *persecution*—such are the strange inconsistencies which the doctrine, morals, and conduct of the pretended philosophers of the present age present us.

The detractors of religion have maintained, that religious wars have been known only among Christians. This assertion, repeated in all their works, and particularly in those of M. de Voltaire, is so much the more extraordinary, as ancient and modern history demonstrate evidently the falsehood of it.—The Mahometan religion is, of all religions, that which has caused the most wars and bloody disputes, by the long divisions of the sects of Ali and Omar; and history also proves, that the laws of the Greeks and the Romans were decidedly intolerant upon worship. Yet, M. de Voltaire has written, ‘ That of all the ancient people, none has restrained the liberty of thinking; that, among the Greeks, Socrates only was persecuted for his opinions; that the Romans permitted every kind of worship, and that they looked upon
‘ tolerance

‘ tolerance as the most sacred law of the rights of mankind *.’ I find, in the learned author of *Des Lettres de quelques Juifs*, an excellent recapitulation of that which proves the intolerance of the ancients. The following is the rapid and circumstantial extract :

‘ Intolerance was a principle of legislation—a maxim of policy received among the ancients, even the most celebrated. In fact, when one sees Abraham persecuted; in Chaldea, for his religion, and the celebrated Zoroaster, armed with fire and sword, persecuting the kingdom of Touran; when one sees the Hebrews afraid to offer sacrifices in Egypt, for fear of irritating the people against them; the Persians breaking the statues of the divinities of Egypt and of Greece; and the different Egyptian sects arming themselves, sometimes against their conquerors, and sometimes one against the other, to defend or avenge their gods; it seems that they cannot well be looked upon as indifferent about worship. . . . Let us not quote the cities of Peloponnesus, and their severity against atheism; the Ephesians pursuing Heraclitus as an impious man; the Greeks armed against each other, by the zeal of religion, in the war of the Amphyctions. Let us not speak of the frightful cruelties which three successors of Alexander exercised upon the Jews, to force them to abandon their worship; neither of Antiochus driving the philosophers from his states; nor of the Epicureans, banished from several Grecian cities because they corrupted the morals of the citizens by their maxims and examples. Let us not seek for proofs of intolerance at so great a distance: Athens, the polite and learned Athens, will furnish us with proofs enough. Each citizen took a public and solemn oath to conform to and defend the religion of the country; an express law punished severely all discourses against the gods, and a rigorous decree ordained those, who should

* *Traité de la Tolérance*, article *Si les Romains ont été tolérans*.

' dare to deny their existence, to be impeached.—
 ' The proceedings answered to the severity of the le-
 ' gislation. . . . The process begun against Protago-
 ' ras: the price put upon the head of Diagoras; the
 ' danger of Alcibiades; Aristotle obliged to fly;
 ' Stilpon banished; Anaxagoras escaping with difficul-
 ' ty from death; Phineas accused; Aspasia owing
 ' her safety to the eloquence and tears of Pericles;
 ' Pericles himself, after so many services rendered to his
 ' country, and so much glory acquired to himself, con-
 ' strained to appear before the tribunals, and to defend
 ' himself publicly*; the dramatic poets even in dan-
 ' ger, notwithstanding the passion of the Athenians
 ' for the amusements of the theatre; the people mur-
 ' muring against one of them, and his piece interrupt-
 ' ed until he had justified himself; another judged,
 ' dragged to execution, and near being stoned, when
 ' he was happily delivered by his brother†. All these
 ' philosophers, and women celebrated for their wit and
 ' beauty, these poets, and statesmen, pursued juridi-
 ' cally for having written or spoken against the gods;
 ' a priestess executed for having introduced strange
 ' gods; Socrates condemned, and drinking the juice
 ' of hemlock, &c. are facts which announce sufficient-
 ' ly, that favour, dignity, merit, even the most ac-
 ' knowledged talents, were no sure shelter for irreligi-
 ' gion. The laws of Rome were not less ex-
 ' plicit, nor less severe. *Thou shalt not wor-*
 ' *ship strange gods*, say they, formally. The
 ' intolerance of strange worship among the Romans
 ' went back to the laws of the twelve tables, and even
 ' to those of the kings. Examine the history of this

* Pericles, disciple and friend of Anaxagoras, became suspected at Athens, for having taken up the defence of that philosopher.—*Note of the author of Des Lettres.*

† Eschylus. His brother saved him by presenting his arm naked, and shewing, with tears, to the Athenians, that he had lost a hand in combating for them. The other poet is Euripides. Both were accused of having spoken irreverently of the gods.—*Note of the author of Des Lettres.*

6 famous

' famous people, you will there see the same prohibi-
 ' tions by the senate, in the year of Rome 325, and
 ' the ediles charged to see them observed in the
 ' year 529; the ediles severely reprimanded for having
 ' neglected to give their assistance, and superior magis-
 ' trates named to cause them to be more particularly
 ' observed. You will there see the worship of Serapis
 ' and of Iris forbidden, and oratories or chapels of
 ' those new divinities demolished by the consuls in the
 ' year 536; decrees without number of the Pontiffs,
 ' and of the Senatus Consulti, against strange religions,
 ' quoted by the senate in the year 566, and a new
 ' worship proscribed in the year 623.—This intolerance
 ' did not discontinue under the emperors, witness the
 ' counsels of Mécenas to Augustus*, not only against
 ' the atheists and the impious, but against those who
 ' introduced or honoured, in Rome, other gods than
 ' those of the empire; witness the Egyptian super-
 ' stitions proscribed. . . . The strange gods, which
 ' the relaxation of discipline had introduced, driven
 ' out under Claudius; the Jews banished, on account
 ' of their religion, under Tiberius; and, above all, the
 ' Christians exiled, despoiled of their property, and de-
 ' livered over for such a length of time, and in such
 ' numbers, to the most cruel torments, wholly on ac-
 ' count of their religion, under Néro, Domitian,
 ' Maximilian, Dioclesian, &c. and even under the

*—*The Counsels of Mécenas to Augustus.* See Dion
 Cassius, lib. xlii. " Nous croyons, dit l'auteur Des Lettres
 " de quelques Juifs, devoir rapporter ici en entier le pas-
 " sage de cette histoire. Nous le traduirons littéralement
 " d'après le texte Grec. Honorez vous-même, dit Mécène à
 " Auguste, honorez soigneusement les Dieux selon les usages
 " de nos peres, et forcez les autres de les honorer. Laissez
 " ceux qui innovent dans la religion, et punissez-les, non
 " seulement à cause des Dieux (qui les méprise ne respecte
 " rien); mais parce que ceux qui introduisent des Dieux
 " nouveaux, engagent plusieurs personnes à suivre des loix
 " étrangères, et que delà naissent des unions par serment,
 " des ligues, des associations, toutes choses dangereuses
 " dans la monarchie. Ne souffrez point les Athées, &c."

—*Note de l'auteur Des Lettres.*

‘ most humane emperors, under Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, &c. The laws even which the philosophers of Rome and Athens wrote for imaginary republics are intolerant. Plato does not leave to the citizens the liberty of worship, and Cicero expressly forbids them from having any other gods than those of the state.’

Your Highness sees whether or not *the ancients have restrained the liberty of thinking; if, among the Greeks, Socrates only were persecuted; if the Romans permitted every kind of worship, and looked upon tolerance as a sacred right, &c.* Is it conceivable that such gross falsehoods, so easily to be refuted, can be printed with such confidence? It is thus that M. de Voltaire has written upon every subject. It is him again, who, in speaking of fanaticism (*dans l’Histoire du Siècle de Louis XIV.*) says, ‘ This enthusiasm was unknown to paganism; it covered the earth with darkness, but it seldom moistened it but with the blood of animals.’ — The blood of so many human victims, sacrificed in honour of false gods, and that multitude of captives which superstition slaughtered upon tombs! the numerous suicides authorized and consecrated by the pagan religion! could all these facts, and those which I have already quoted, be unknown to M. de Voltaire? Was he ignorant, that his hero, that *philosophical* prince, whom he has so much extolled, Julian the apostate, misled, disgraced by an horrid superstition, stained with human blood his victorious hands, by consulting futurity in palpitating entrails! — ‘ But what was the origin of the persecutions against the Christians? Was it, as in the wars of the sixteenth century, the cabal, revolt, policy, or faction of the great and powerful? No; the Christians were obedient to the emperors, they fulfilled all the duties of citizens; superstition alone spilt their blood, caused them to suffer the most frightful torments; and that cruel persecution, which lasted three centuries, could never force them to revolt, not even when they might have disturbed or
‘ overturned

overturned the empire*. And this fury,' says M. de Voltaire, '*was unknown to paganism*!'

What confidence can a writer, who discovers so much partiality, inspire? The excess of his inconsistency is not less strange. Even the most moderate zeal for religion appeared to him absurd and cruel; and yet he deifies pagan princes, and calls them *sages, adorable benefactors*; and these same princes, Marcus Aurelius, Trajan, and Adrian, joined to the most extravagant superstition, a spirit of persecution which occasioned rivers of blood to flow: they commanded the massacre of a multitude of Christians. Thus the pagan fanatics were, in the eyes of M. de Voltaire, *benefactors* of mankind, *adorable* princes; and, to detest really the furies of this kind, it was necessary he should attribute them to the fanaticism of Christians.

M. de Voltaire, desirous to establish an universal tolerance, in order to give more weight to his opinions, has not failed to attribute them to several respectable philosophers, who, far from thinking like him, had, on the contrary, principles directly opposite; among others, the virtuous and celebrated Locke, who has written letters upon tolerance.—But, as one of the authors whom I have just quoted judiciously remarks, it is known that the tolerance of Locke 'is not an unlimited tolerance; he excludes, by name, from it atheists, materialists, deists, &c.: he would not, therefore have tolerated either the writings wherein these dangerous systems are established, or the authors of them†.'

M. de Voltaire, and all the other detractors of religion, have frequently repeated, that Christianity ordained heretics to be exterminated, to be delivered over to torments, in order to make them change their opinions, &c. These imputations are extravagant. It is impossible to quote, I do not say one passage from the Gospel, but one council, one formula of faith, wherein a father of the church has authorized these horrid max-

* Lettres critiques de M. l'Abbé Gauchat.

† Lettres de quelque Juifs.

ims. Besides, as the Abbé Gauchat remarks, ‘ the church could not employ temporal pains, since it does not depend on a temporal jurisdiction. To render the inquisition more odious, it is supposed that it punishes all those who continue in the errors they have imbibed in their infancy. Nothing is more false; it does not punish infidels and heretics, born in error; its rigour extends to those only, who, having freely embraced the faith, outrage and renounce it. This is the only apostacy it punishes. The priests are judges of this tribunal; they decide whether or not the culprits be convicted of impiety; they never proceed beyond this examination, they never sign arrêts, which are made by lay-judges, whose authority proceeds from the sovereign.’

I do not, assuredly, pretend to make an apology for the inquisition; I find even that M. de Voltaire, and his copyists, in saying that it *pronounces and signs sentences of death*, have asserted an awkward falsehood; for the exact truth renders, upon this point, this tribunal still more odious.

Why does not it pronounce sentence of death? It is because the Gospel reprobates too formally this sanguinary zeal: but the inquisition well knows that such a formula of judgment will condemn the culpable to death. Thus, whilst it feigns to respect the sacred laws of the Gospel, it outrages and infringes them, by appearing to submit to and follow them. It then joins hypocrisy to inhumanity. He who violates openly one law, may be less culpable than he who strives to elude it: it is possible that the crime of the first may be the effect of ignorance; but it is evident, that the second acts against the dictates of his conscience, and the light of his understanding.—With respect to the imputation, that the inquisition causes *heretics* and *infidels* to be burnt, it is at once false and calumnious. The inquisition punishes apostacy only, that is to say, impiety united to perjury, which is extremely different.

Of

Of all the errors of the human mind, the most inconceivable is, undoubtedly, that of a sanguinary zeal, which thinks to honour God by putting to death those who offend him.—*A servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men ; apt to teach, patient : in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* Second Epist. of St. Paul to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 24 and 25.—To abridge the life of the impious man, is to take from him the means of conversion ; it is depriving God of a soul which time might have been able to render him. You desire to bring that man back to faith ; he resists, he blasphemes, and you are about to take away his life. And what if he die in that state ! he is for ever reprobated ! In putting him to death, you plunge him into hell : you know it, you believe it firmly, and you pronounce that terrible sentence ! You weak mortal ! you condemn a culprit, your brother, to eternal punishment ! Perhaps he has run no more than half his course ; are you sure, then, that time, reflection, and age, will not change his sentiments ? Let him repent, say you ; I am willing that he should live eight days longer, a month ; but, at the end of this time, let him retract, or die. You grant him a delay of a few days, and God gives him one of several years, half a century perhaps ; and you dare to prevent the effects of divine mercy !

I do not know if there be to be found in the Gospel an indirect or tacit approbation of pain of death imposed upon culprits who violate the laws ; but in vain may we seek for one single word which can authorize a Christian to pursue to condemnation and death an infidel or an impious man ; on the contrary, I see in every line a positive order to support and tolerate those who err, and not to strive to recall them, except by patience, indulgence, and lenity. Saints and true Christians have always followed these maxims. Saint Ambrose refused to communicate with those who prosecuted the heretics to death. St. Augustin, animat-

ed

ed by the same spirit of tolerance, in striving to unite the Donatists, made no difficulty of writing to them *. 'It is our will,' wrote pope St. Gregory to the bishop of Terracina, who had driven the Jews from a place where they were accustomed to assemble themselves; 'It is our will that you cause these complaints to cease; for it is by lenity, goodness, and exhortations, that infidels must be invited to the Christian religion, and not by threats and terror. . . . They must not be brought over to it in spite of themselves; for it is written, I will offer you a voluntary sacrifice †.' The history of the celebrated Lascafas, bishop of Joppa, is universally known. This virtuous prelate was forty years the protector of the Indians: during this long space of time his tolerance and humanity never varied; and such is the true spirit of Christianity. I think I have proved, that, especially for the man who believes in religion, there is certainly no action more inhuman than that of taking away the life of a wretch who persists in his error; therefore this frightful zeal, equally reprobated by the Gospel and by nature, is as barbarous as it is absurd. Christian tolerance prescribes, never to judge ill upon appearances, or upon impeachments; not to strive to penetrate to the bottom of consciences; and not to persecute any body, in any manner whatsoever, on account of his particular faith: consequently, it hinders impiety from being found in a work where religion is not directly and formally attacked; and it shelters from all prosecution the anonymous authors of those contemptible productions. But pretended philosophers were not contented with this tolerance; and it will be of use to give your Highness a clear and precise definition of that which they would willingly establish. One of the maxims which they have published, with the greatest success, is this, *That no person has a right to restrain the liberty of thinking.* Taking it literally, it is a trivial truth, and assur-

* Histoire Ecclesiastique of M. de Fleury, tom. iv. et v.

† Hist. Eccles. tom. viii.

edly incontestable ; every body was struck with it, without reflecting upon the real sense which the philosophers attached to it ; and it has been repeated with indignation, that it was *absurd*, that it was *frightful* to restrain the *liberty of thinking*. But this is what that philosophical sentence signifies, *No person has a right to restrain the liberty of speaking and writing* ; that is to say, every man may have, not only a right, in public assemblies, in public walks, in coffee-houses, &c. to attack and injure, by his discourse, religion, government, and morals, but he may spread his pernicious opinions and seditious declamations all over Europe, and even transmit them to posterity by printing them publicly. Such was the idea of all the pretended philosophers whom I have quoted.——An anonymous writer, a secret partisan of that false philosophy, has lately maintained this opinion. He will have every thing, without exception, printed ; he adds, that this is a sacred right *. The same author says again, *That religion ought no more to be the object of laws than the manner of dressing or eating*. There is, as it may be perceived, some obscurity in this phrase, and such is always the style of the author ; he explains afterwards this thought, so badly expressed, in a very diffuse manner, but very clear, in adding, that no crime against religion ought to be punished. What ! if the crime be proved scandalous, glaring, ought not policy alone to punish it ? To outrage openly and publicly the religion of one's country, is it not to brave the laws and sovereign authority ? and ought they not, in that case, to treat as a madman, him whom they may not be willing to punish as a criminal ?—But let us return to philosophical tolerance. These are the desires which it has formed for these forty years past :—That full liberty may be given to preach atheism and materialism, to calumniate ministers and the church, to turn into ridicule worship and the most sacred ceremonies ; that full liberty may be had to print publicly the most licentious

* Vie de M. Turgot, p. 260.

writings, and that of attacking in them individuals, persons in places; finally, to sign without fear defamatory libels; that it may be permitted to criticise government, to discredit in the eyes of the people operations of which it often happens that public confidence only can insure the success; that it may be permitted to undertake to prove that all our administration and our laws are absurd; that from the beginning of the monarchy, down to our own time, all the kings, ministers, and magistrates, whose talents and genius we have admired, had however no sound idea of policy and legislation*; in a word, that nothing hinders the people from being excited to revolt, from being made to despise their superiors and the laws, and from being exhorted to shake off the yoke.—Such are the ideas and principles propagated in an infinity of philosophic works printed without approbation, and this is what philosophy desires may be published without restriction.—Depraved writers, or those without talents, indefatigably repeat, that *the court and the priests are two insurmountable barriers, which prevent those discoveries study and meditation might produce, &c.*†. The immortal authors of the *Siècle* of Louis XIV. never made such complaints: they naturally respected that which every virtuous citizen ought to revere: and to acquire a brilliant and lasting reputation, it was not necessary for them to keep measures with vice, to authorise the sensual passions, to attack religion, or to overturn the principles of morality.

* This is what they have frequently undertaken to prove in clandestine writings, and particularly in that intitled, *La Vie de M. Turgot.*

† Lettr. s. Juifs.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.